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University of Cape Town  
Faculty of Humanities

**Contradictions in policy and implementation  
of  
adult education and training:**

**Unifying the system or accommodating diversity?**

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy

by

**Yuko Kikuchi**

April 2001

## Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

Yuko Kikuchi

20 April 2001

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- my friends for their warm support and encouragement.



## Abstract

This study attempts to examine and answer the research question: "What is the feasibility of the integration of education and training through promotion of the GETC as envisaged within the NQF discourse?" Focusing on problematic educational policy implementation in South Africa, the study also attempts to examine causes for the disparity between intended policies and implemented policies.

The study consists of two phases, a preliminary survey (Phase I) and a follow-up survey (Phase II). The preliminary survey was conducted with a tentative research question: "Is articulation between ABET and FET happening among adult learners?" for the purpose of introducing the field of adult education in the South African context and shaping the final research question. To do so, fairly unstructured interviews with adult learners, educational providers and government officials of the ABET and FET bands were conducted.

In the process of narrowing down the research question, the author realised that the articulation between ABET and FET is not yet happening because of several issues, especially the integrated approach that the NQF envisages.

The follow-up survey consists of quantitative and qualitative data collection from fifty adult learners and nine educational providers at ten adult education sites in the Western Cape. Using this data, the study interrogates the integrated approach at the level of learners, educational providers and the state.

The study analyses the data that shows the disparity between policy and practice, for example, the disparity between combinations of registered and interested learning areas of adult learners, the disparity between learners' interests and providers' perceptions of learners and the disparity between the missions of ABET and FET. It allows the author to answer the research question and point out the causes for the disparities between policy and practice at the end of the study.

## List of acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
CBO(s)	Community Based Organisation(s)
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CTCP	Committee of Technical College Principals
EU	European Union
FET	Further Education and Training
GET(C)	General Education and Training (Certificate)
HET	Higher Education and Training
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SMME(s)	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise(s)
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

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## 1.1. Motivation and entry into the field

Lifelong learning is currently one of the most frequently-used terms in adult education. Having been involved in vocational training as a part of community development services in Southeast Asian countries, I have been interested in the issue of motivation of adult learners. Interestingly, 'lifelong learning' and 'adult education' in my country, Japan, and those countries are dissimilar. In Japan, lifelong learning and adult education are often regarded as extramural studies. Adult learners are willing to invest time and money to satisfy their spirit of inquiry. What they learn is often not related to their jobs and the purposes of learning are rather for gratification of their thirst for knowledge and not for survival. In Japan, approximately ninety-seven percent of the population graduate from high school and forty-five percent of them go into higher education. Their motivation to learn is usually very high, especially among relatively older adult learners. On the other hand, in countries such as Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand, lifelong learning for adults has been portrayed as one of the key issues of national development in relation to economic growth and the improvement of living conditions, especially in rural areas. Although in comparison with Japan, the role of lifelong learning and adult education in those countries is significant, adult learners' motivation is relatively low, their learning progression is slower and the rate of accomplishment in learning is lower. Yet there is little in the way of academic and theoretical approaches to understand and motivate adults to engage in efficient and effective lifelong learning. I thought this may be because there was little understanding of adult learners' 'needs' and 'interests' in the vocational training programmes that I had worked for. Therefore I personally went through several trials and errors (including Freire's approach) in an attempt to understand adult learners' 'needs' and 'interests' that, I believed, ultimately could be a key to motivate adult learners. However there had not been clear answers to my question; 'how to motivate adult learners?' It is not my intention to address adult learners' needs and interests in this study, yet both are underlying and hidden questions of this study. With this unsolved question, I came to South Africa for the purpose of searching for an answer.

## 1.2. Shaping the research question in the South African adult education context

Since the inception of a democratic government in South Africa in 1994, new educational policies have been introduced one after another. At the very first stage of my study, I came across the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and its components; the General Education and Training (GET) band, the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) band, the Further Education and Training (FET) band and the Higher Education and Training (HET) band. Related to my unsolved question, I found it exceedingly interesting that adult education is included as being equivalent to compulsory education within the framework, because I had never seen such a framework for adult learners in Japan nor in the Southeast Asian countries. In those countries, there was a lot of motivation towards vocational training especially through informal organisations and Non-government Organisations (NGOs) but no framework was available that aimed at including adult learners who had been excluded from a formal education pathway. It seemed considerably challenging to include in a single framework such diverse adult learners, in terms of age, gender, language, educational level, cultural and social background and 'needs'/'interests'. For example, the age of adult learners ranges from sixteen to seventy. At the same time, I was amazed that educational policy could attempt to respond to such diversity. In my understanding, policy must meet both national level strategies and it must satisfy individuals' needs as well. It is immensely difficult to understand learners' needs and to respond to them within policy frameworks because the needs are so diverse. I questioned whether engaging a sixteen year old learner and a sixty year old learner in the same framework was appropriate or not. However, if there is any group excluded from policy practice, that policy is going to fail. Eventually my unsolved question shifted to examine how educational policy could meet such diverse adult learners' 'needs'/'interests' in South Africa. So my research was launched with the intention of comparing educational policy and practice.



### 1.2.1. Uniqueness of the study; the role of Phase I and II

Although my research is orientated towards policy in adult education I had to start the study from zero as a foreign researcher not knowing much of contemporary educational thought in the South African context. Because of this, the study required two phases; these were a preliminary survey (Phase I) and a follow-up survey (Phase II).

### 1.2.2. Phase I

Phase I was for the purpose of;

- searching for a research question,
- constructing a perspective of adult education in policy and practice,
- shaping and narrowing down the research question,
- checking feasibility of my research question and
- setting up an hypothesis.

#### 1.2.2.1. Policy documents review

After being introduced to the NQF, I started reviewing policy documents to understand educational restructuring in South Africa. I recognised that there are two axes of direction of learning progression behind the NQF. These are vertical learning progression and horizontal learning progression. The NQF suggested an openness of vertical learning progression from the GETC band (including ABET) to the FET band, and from the FET band to the HET band. At the same time it promotes horizontal learning progression, in other words learners are to obtain more flexible and marketable skills as 'human resources'. However I was sceptical about the learning progression of adult learners (in ABET) within the NQF because they are meant to obtain the GETC that young students in schools usually spend nine years to obtain. I personally do not think I would be willing to start learning from Grade 1 level after a long absence from school. I would rather obtain skills to get a job instead of learning traditional subjects.

#### 1.2.2.2. Site visits to form the first research question

##### *Sampling*

With this question, I started visiting adult education sites to observe classes and to interview educational providers and learners. The criteria for sampling sites was according to the historical background of each site. Those providers that are registered as ABET and FET providers (most of them are currently technical colleges) have different historical backgrounds; either state, companies, NGOs/CBOs, municipalities, religious, and civil organisations. It is important to note that one of the sites I visited was a vocational training provider which did not require learners to be literate to enrol. I included this site into the sample simply because they had adult learners. Regarding learners, I did not persist in defining particular characteristics of adult learners because I saw this as a preliminary survey and their characteristics were too diverse to categorise. Furthermore gaining access to a certain group of adult learners was logistically quite difficult.

##### *Four groups of adult learners*

Soon after starting visiting some sites, it became evident that adult learners had had much difficulty in their learning progression within the NQF, particularly those who were disadvantaged over-aged learners. My very first research question then emerged although it was still vague and broad, and that was:

"Is articulation between ABET and FET happening for adult learners?"

Another interesting issue was that there appeared to be among learners and providers more interest in academic studies than vocational training. Learners and providers seemed to devote themselves to obtaining the matriculation certificate. I characterised this as the 'Matric-mad' phenomenon. However other categories which could describe the purpose of learning were also found such as the 'Skills-mad', the 'Feel-good' and/or the 'Purpose-unclear'. In this stage, the 'Feel-good' and the 'Purpose-unclear' seem similar to a certain extent. By categorising them into these four groups, adult learners' needs/interests emerged.

##### *Anomalies*

Providers often commented on how the NQF concept was not feasible in adult

education, and I noted a number of anomalies. Details will be presented in chapter 4, but I note some of them as follows:

- the confusion of the ABET and FET budgets' usage,
- the stigmatisation of adult learners as inferiors who 'lack' competency to cope with theoretical learning,
- the slow learning progression,
- the problems with the merger of the ABET and FET provision among providers,
- the different placement requirements for vocational training from academic studies,
- the lack of feasibility in the Recognition of Prior Learning between FET and HET,
- the low and different motivation among employed and unemployed adult learners,
- the minimum learning progression between ABET and FET, and
- the lack of linkage between ABET and FET providers in terms of learners' mobility.

#### 1.2.2.3. The final research question and hypothesis

After visiting sites, I had answered the first research question, whether articulation between ABET and the FET is happening or not. The answer is 'no.' I noted that there are a number of reasons why this is so. The drop out rate and the time spent on progression among adult learners seemed disappointing. It could be explained as a result of a combination of broad social issues such as poverty and gender, learners' issues such as ambiguous and various motivations, providers' issues such as poor resource and support, and educational systems' issues such as underdevelopment of curriculum, integration of education and training and others. Certainly each issue has an impact on learners' learning progression but, among them, one of the findings that I strongly felt to be problematic was the 'Matric-mad' phenomenon among learners. Learners and providers tend to explain how matriculation is important to secure employment. However I personally could not envisage adult learners with matriculation but without skills to secure employment. This led me to focus on one of the reasons why I believed that the articulation is non-existent, that is the question of the integration of education and training. By including the vocational training site, I could make well-balanced comparisons between Matric-mad learners and Skills-mad learners who represented 'education' and 'training' respectively. Therefore the final research question became:

“What is the feasibility of integration of education and training through the promotion of the GETC as envisaged within the NQF discourse?”

A hypothesis behind the question is:

The integration is problematic and not happening in the way the NQF promotes. What is happening on the ground among learners and providers is inclined towards either education or training. The majority of adult learners and providers are 'Matric-mad' and learners are struggling to progress through their studies.

### 1.2.3. Phase II

With this research question, I started a follow-up survey. Regarding sampling, I had two choices, whether to work on a specific site that has linkage/articulation between ABET and FET and examine how their articulation is taking place in a specific content, or whether I work across all sites I had visited in the preliminary survey. I chose the latter. There were two reasons why I did so.

Firstly, there were not reliable data available for my study, especially in terms of quantitative research. At the same time of reviewing policy documents and visiting sites, I tried to grasp quantitative data on adult education in South Africa. However it was unbelievably difficult to find data. Even the Western Cape Education Department did not have comprehensive statistics on adult learners and providers. I came across the most comprehensive survey data on technical colleges (future FET colleges) done by the National Business Initiative, however it provides a surface-type of data only. Although I tried to find a linkage between ABET providers and FET providers in terms of learners' transference, there was not much found. I assumed it was because of a dearth of available data. It seemed that providers' capacity for tracing their learners was not good enough.

Secondly, related to data availability mentioned above, there was not much general research done on adult education, in relation to adult learners' needs and interests which would underpin adult educational policies, across a wide range of providers and adult learners. Adult learners in a certain area, site and community may have more interest in academic learning rather than skills training. On the other hand, a certain type of adult learner depending on their age, gender, educational level, employment status, working experience and cultural and social background may be interested in

skills training rather than traditional subjects. While, a certain group of adult learners may merely be interested in participating in classes rather than obtaining qualifications, and vice versa.

I personally believe that one of the roles of academic research should be to find a rule, formula or pattern that can be applied as widely or commonly as possible. Furthermore, I believe that criteria for evaluating policy should be the same as for academic research. As long as policies are meant to apply as widely as possible they should be developed on the basis of a confident understanding and addressing of those adult learners' needs and interests. If a policy was effective only to a certain group of adult learners and excluded anybody and any practice, the policy is faulty. That is why I needed to collect data across sites to be able to study adult education generally rather than specifically.

### 1.3. Limitations of this study

There are three major limitations in this study. Firstly, because of the diversity of adult learners' characteristics and the limitations of my research in terms of time and size, I decided to focus on a group of adult learners who tend to be marginalised; that is 'disadvantaged over-aged' adult learners. The definition for disadvantaged over-aged adult learners is thirty years old and older, unemployed and not having marketable skills and a desirable education level (six years school education or less) to be employed. The educational bands I chose were the ABET and FET because most of my target group of adult learners are in these bands and not in the HET band. To define 'disadvantaged over-aged' was not easy because if there were a twenty year old learner taking care of his/her family with no stable income, the learner should be disadvantaged if compared with a thirty five year old learner with a stable income and less family concerns. To continue the research across those sites, I needed to set the definition. Therefore I chose age, working status, skills and educational level because these were easy to categorise. However it was impossible to keep to the definition faithfully because the information depended on what learners said rather than on objective measures. Sometimes what they said was unclear and changed according to circumstances. Many times the sample of adult learners was inadequate at sites I chose, so I had to include several learners who did not meet the definition. So the

sample I collected data from does include those who did not meet the definition.

Secondly, Phase I of this study was conducted in fifteen sites in the Western Cape province. However due to the difficulty of arranging meeting schedules with all of them, ten sites remained. For quantitative data collection, I could obtain answers from nine providers and fifty learners from ten sites. I could not collect data from one provider because the provider did not agree to answer my questionnaire. I did use five learners' data from this tenth provider because I thought I knew enough about this site from interviewing an educational counsellor who monitored their programme and feedback from educators during several visits. The criterion for sampling was based on sites' historical background, geographical location and educational band they belong to. The fifteen sites will not be identified by name to protect their identities.

Thirdly, because none of the policies that I have studied have stabilised and most are still under discussion, I had to refer to a range of literature and extract commonalities from them to understand national educational policies. I had to find commonalities amongst what appeared to be these floating policies by myself, because policies had been issued at different times and were not always congruent with each other.

#### 1.4. The structure of this dissertation

In this section, I introduce the structure of this dissertation, which consists of six chapters. In chapter 1, I explain my motivation in studying adult education and my entry into the field of adult education in South Africa. It also describes the uniqueness of my study in that it has two phases with the first involving a process of not only studying adult education in the South African context, but also shaping my research question. Finally, I state the limitation of this study.

In chapter 2, I explain the policy cycle and conceptualisation in general. Then I examine the NQF background, conceptualisation and issues in the South African context framing my theory in this study.

In chapter 3, I introduce methodologies I used in Phase I and II. According to the

process of studying adult education in the South African context and narrowing down the research question, the kind of methodologies have also changed. I explain the change as well.

In chapter 4, I present and analyse the data collected from the preliminary survey in Phase I. It consists of an introduction to the sites from which I obtained class observations and interviews with learners and providers, and official perspectives on ABET and FET from interviews with government officials. The site introduction presents the current circumstances of adult education, the latter presents the state's perspective of both bands, current issues and new challenges.

In chapter 5, I present and analyse data from the follow-up survey in Phase II. It consists of analysis of learners' purpose of learning, providers' perspectives on the purpose and providers' understandings of their mission. I attempt to examine congruence between learners' needs and providers' responses by using this data. Furthermore, at the end of this chapter, I introduce recent dynamic and drastic changes happening among providers and at state level.

In chapter 6, to conclude this study, I attempt to answer the research question by complying with the theoretical framework. Furthermore, I argue that there are problematic issues embedded in the concept of lifelong learning in the South African context which need further discussion.

In the end of this study, I provide references and appendices at the end to supplement an understanding of this study.

## Chapter 2 Theoretical framework

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During and after the preliminary survey, I noted a disparity between policy and practice. The way that the NQF envisages learning progression through its framework (based on the concept of lifelong learning) and what is happening in practice in adult education institutions seemed asymmetrical. Although the NQF promotes vertical and horizontal learning progression through the accumulation of credits based on unit standards and the rules of combination, the learning progression of adult learners in Cape Town institutions does not occur in that way. There are at present many adult learners learning in the FET band without having acquired the GETC. Furthermore I was told that there is, as yet, no adult learner who has obtained the GETC by adult educators. There is a certain tendency amongst providers to focus on the purpose of learning depending on each learner's needs, either academic subjects-oriented (the 'Matric-mad'), pleasure of learning-oriented (the 'Feel-good'), vocational training-oriented (the 'Skills-mad') or a combination of these and others (the 'Purpose-unclear'). The combinations of subjects that learners take according to their interests do not match the rules of combination and satisfy requirements to obtain national certificates. Furthermore, there seemed to be doubt amongst providers whether any adult learners will meet all the requirements in a learning pathway that the NQF promotes in the future.

My underlying question was why policy makers plan and try to implement such a framework although it seems impracticable. Policy should be inclusive and applied to the public. Anomalies should be minimised, or ideally there should not be anomalies when policy is implemented. Policy makers should have examined common needs in the society so that the policy can reflect and achieve common needs of the society. Furthermore, I asked why policy in South Africa is unstable and controversial. From my perspective of policy developed in Japan, policy is stable and not 'floating', nor is it constantly being challenged and easily interpreted. Although many debates are taking place in the process of policy initiation and formation, after implementation, policy stays in place for a while. It takes time for the policy to bear the brunt of modification in order to adapt to social change and adjust to needs evaluation. The policy cycle in Japan



extends over a long period of time probably because of stability of the society that allows policy makers to grasp social needs and forecast the social changes that need to be reflected in policies.

However, I found that educational policies in South Africa are different. There are a number of debates and consequent modifications of policies still taking place. There appears to be an immense disparity between policy and practice. Although policy should be understood coherently by all stakeholders, there is little evidence of this. I questioned what causes the disparity between policy and practice in South Africa. Bearing this question in mind, in the following sections, I firstly study what policy is, including policy cycles and conceptualisations. Secondly, I examine my target educational policy in this study, the NQF, including its background and concepts. Thirdly, I examine the notion of 'integration of education and training' in NQF discourse. Finally, I explain how I draw these issues into this study.

## 2.1. What is policy?

In this section I attempt to formulate what policy is by drawing on ideas about the policy cycle (how policy is formed) and the nature of policy (policy as discourse and text). In doing so, I try to find congruency between what I have found in the practice during the preliminary survey and the policy.

### 2.1.1. Policy cycle

In a normative sense, policy should be inclusive. The reason why it should not be exclusive is that policy is supposed to be a reflection of common needs of the society. However no policy can be ever concluded because common needs tend to change with the times. Supposing this is so, how is policy formed? In this section, I explain my understanding of the policy cycle and issues behind the cycle.

de Clercq (1997:129) introduces four processes in the policy cycle. These are; policy initiation, formulation, implementation and evaluation. Politicians are responsible for

policy formulation, whereas the bureaucracy has responsibility for policy implementation. The translation of policy is assumed to be a smooth process. When 'intended policies' and 'implemented policies' are discrepant, this is usually attributed to the lack of institutional and resourcing capacities of the state bureaucrats or the inadequate control systems over the bureaucrats. This seems to be a commonly accepted theory as a cause of discrepancy, (especially in Africa) by international agencies such as the World Bank.

Furthermore, de Clercq engages with two kinds of approaches to policy that Elmore (1980) argues are the cause of discrepancy. One is 'forward mapping', and the other is 'backward mapping'. Forward mapping is a top-down approach to policy implementation led by political power holders at national/legislative level. They have the initiative in policy implementation. The problem of this approach is that policy implementation is not rooted in the realities of the educators/implementers on the ground. Backward mapping, on the contrary, is a bottom-up approach starting with the lowest level of the implementation process. Unlike the forward mapping approach, this approach allows policy to engage with reality-based targets. The problem of this approach is that the process takes a long time and the idea is very idealistic.

#### 2.1.2. Two conceptualisations of policy

Ball (1993:10) raises the problem that policy analysts take the meaning of policy for granted. By doing so, policy analysts reach policies within a framework of the meanings that they give to policy, and this affects their research and interpretation of their findings. He argues that policy is rather more dynamic, and ever contested and floating, and always in a state of 'becoming', of 'was', 'never was', and 'not quite'. Policies are not stable and rigid things, but are processes and outcomes. He suggests seeing policy in two very different conceptualisations, one is policy as 'text', and the other is as 'discourse'.

#### 2.1.2.1. Policy as text

Policy as text is continuously contested and floating. There is not one solo understanding and interpretation of a policy because policy makers cannot control and sustain consistency in the meaning of policy texts. Firstly, policy text is a representation of various policy agencies and the product of compromises at various stages. In the process of making policy, policy is encoded under the influence of immense “struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations, and encoded under the influence of infinite numbers of actors interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context” (pg 11). Policy is attached with plural meanings, and because of this policy has immanent discursiveness.

Secondly, after policy is implemented and goes into institutions where other policies have been practised, the policy becomes intervention and subject to being dragged into the multiple power relations among other policies which have been implemented in the institutions. Afterwards, it is impossible to predict or assume how policy will be managed.

There is a tremendously complex “relationship between policy intentions, texts, interpretations and reactions” (pg 13). In terms of what policy analysts should take into account when they examine social effects, Ball quotes Offe (pg 13) as follows:

the real social effects ('impact') of a law or institutional service are not determined by the wording of laws and statutes ('policy output'), but instead are generated primarily as a consequence of social disputes and conflicts, for which state policy merely establishes the location and timing of the contest, its subject matter and 'the rules of the game'. In these cases of extra-political or 'external' implementation of social policy measures, state social policy in no way establishes concrete 'conditions'. Instead, it defines the substance of conflict and, by differentially empowering or dis-empowering the relevant social groups, biases the extent of the specific 'utility' of the institutions of social policy for these groups.

Thus Ball argues that 'policy analysis requires not an understanding that is based on constraint or agency but on the changing relationships between constraint and agency' (pp 13-14).

#### 2.1.2.2. Policy as discourse

In the perspective of policy as text, policy consists of plural processes in formation and is subject to interpretation, once again, plural in practice; however policy as discourse does not allow this. Instead, policy as discourse shifts and changes its meaning in the arena of politics. According to Ball (1993:14-15):

what policy speaks represents what 'we' are. We may only be able to conceive of the possibilities of response in and through the language, concepts and vocabulary which the discourse makes available to us.

Although

there are real struggles over the interpretation and enactment of policies, ... these are set within a moving discursive frame which articulates and constrains the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment.

In other words, policy as discourse does not allow us to interpret any component of policy because 'we' are defined in policy and we can only play a role as the 'we' that the policy defines. Policy sustains its structure and power within policy itself. However, it is significant to note that the arena of politics is also a plural and complicated place as Burton (1985:104-105) argues:

The state is not a thing; it does not exist as a single, monolithic entity. It is a complex of relationships, embodying a certain form of power operating through various institutional arrangements.... The state is a social-political process, the result at any given moment of struggles and demands.

I realised that policy as discourse may have less flexibility than policy as text, in terms of the permissible range of interpretations in practice, however it also survives in complex power relations in the political arena. Policy as discourse effects the existing frameworks of power relations between multiple policies taking place in practice, but this conceptualisation of policy does not have a direct relationship between such complex and case-by-case interpretation and discursiveness.

Having studied Ball's arguments, I learnt that policy connotes two aspects. Firstly, policy speaks what we are. We can be active, we can have agency, within the policy framework. Secondly, policy enters the complex pre-established terrain of other policies, and is subject to being interpreted differently from policy intentions. Then I realised that I have to examine policy as being situated in a contradictory and

incoherent and enmeshed interrelation between other discourses. I assume that the causes of discrepancy between 'intended policy' and 'implemented policy' that de Clercq explains are related to the permissible range that policy as discourse defines through the assumption of home ranges of policy as text. In other words, if policy makers are able to assume the capacities of the bureaucracy to implement policies, the possible ranges of interpretations at the level of institutions, and other immensely complicated impacts in the policy cycle, and if they are able to reflect these into intended policy, the implemented policy may be much closer to intended policy.

## 2.2. What is the NQF?

South African government has been urged to undertake drastic changes to be a justifiable member of the international community since the inception of a democratic government in 1994. These changes are taking place not only for the purpose of participating in the global open market from the local closed market during apartheid, but also to redress past inequities. Education is one of the most challenging areas because of the significant impact of the past discriminatory delivery of education in relation to national economic development. The NQF has been introduced as a unified South African educational framework to respond to these pressing changes. In this section, I examine the background and concepts of the NQF to understand the intention of the NQF.

### 2.2.1. Background of the NQF

In the following sections, I introduce the backgrounds of the NQF. Firstly, I discuss two pressures forwards educational restructuring in South Africa, one is globalisation, and the other is compensation for past unfairness. Secondly, I explain how the formation of the NQF was based on foreign countries' models of educational reform. Finally, I, introduce the concepts of the NQF, especially the idea of integration.

#### 2.2.1.1. Two pressures forwards educational restructuring

The NQF was formed under two kind of pressures. One is the pressure from global trends, and the other is from local trends. Since globalisation has emerged most countries have been urged to reform their educational qualification system to respond to global trends. The most important change that globalisation brings about is the development of technology that spins rapid demands for higher knowledge and skill amongst workers. Nations need to develop human resources that can 'flexibly' adapt to technologically changing environments at the workplaces, and to restructure new educational systems that provide flexibility to learners. South Africa is no exception to this global trend since it has directed itself towards participation in the global market. Facing economic crises, South Africa needs to compete on export markets for high-quality manufactured goods and to become internationally competitive by developing internationally marketable human resources (NEPI, 1992:8). South Africa needs to move from the old system that had low participation of low skilled workers to a new system that accommodates high participation of high skilled workers to stimulate economic development.

Besides the global trend, there is a unique local trend pressing South Africa as a democratic nation; that is redressing the inequity of past educational provision. It is a primary need to have an equal and unified educational system as a basic need and right for all, who can access and enter at any level, including learners in compulsory schooling, special needs and adult education.

It is significant to note that South Africa has two interrelated but different pressures on educational reform. The pressure from globalisation is primarily an economic target, whereas the pressure from compensatory education is a social target. This complicates educational policies that need to provide common ground in between multiple elements and pressures in the nation. In other words, education in South Africa is not referred to simply as education, but is expected to play a key role which interrelates with both economic development as a human resource feeder and with social issues as an indicator of redressing unfairness. The NQF is fated to have dual goals.

#### 2.2.1.2. Formation process and potential issues of the NQF

To restructure the South African educational system under these pressures, policy makers studied international trends in qualification framework reforms. Through 1980s to 1990s, debates about qualification reforms and their direction under the pressure of globalisation were taking place in countries such as England, Scotland, New Zealand and Australia. The South African qualification framework that would facilitate the development of flexible learners was established by modelling qualification systems of those foreign countries, especially New Zealand.

However there were common problems and dilemmas that these countries have experienced in responding to global trends because responses to the demands for education became complicated. Young (1997:4) explains the common problems and dilemmas in restructuring educational system towards global trends as follows:

1. the increasing proportion of the population getting qualified,
2. the increasing burden on the state of expanding educational demands,
3. the diversity of learning needs among those continuing to study and
4. the shortening of the useful life of more specific occupational skills.

He argues these problems and dilemmas lead to new pressures on qualification systems, for example:

1. the need to balance both flexibility and coherence with inclusiveness and differentiation within a qualification system,
2. the need to reassess the balance of the costs of certification between the state, the individual and employers,
3. the need to make qualifications accessible at every stage of a person's life without denying their crucial role in the period up to early adulthood,
4. the need to find new balances between specific and more generic knowledge and to continue to remember that skills and actual learning are always concrete and specific,
5. the need to resolve the increasingly ambiguous status of the work-based route – as a skill enhancement strategy for the economy and as compensatory education for the disaffected,
6. the need to distinguish between the idea of key skills as a way of overcoming early failure to achieve the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and the idea of key qualifications that relate to the new skills needed for new kinds of work.

I realised not only that these issues are inherent in responding to global trends, but also that these issues have distressed South African policy makers formulating the NQF. If these developed countries (where people have higher basic education and stronger economies) experienced these problems, I wondered how the NQF, (being copied from foreign countries where circumstances are always different) fits in the South African context with its unstable economy, its immature democratic unified system and its diversity of workers' educational levels. I think it is important to see policy not only as it is, but also as a representation of social needs and government initiatives to respond to these needs. By doing so, what I must bear in mind from studying the backgrounds, formation and issues of the NQF is that there is a huge gap between intended policy and its immanent risks, and reality.

#### 2.2.1.3. Concepts of the NQF

Having targeted economic development and the formalisation of the democratic system, and being mindful of potential risks of qualification systems imported from foreign countries, the NQF was introduced. In this section, I examine the central concepts of the NQF, especially focusing on the idea of the integration of education and training.

The NQF was introduced with a catch phrase; "from sweeper to engineer" as it envisaged that all learners will progress in their learning according to the pathway within the qualification framework no matter where the learner starts from. The overall framework is applied to all learners including learners in the mainstream (formal schooling), learners in special needs and adult learners. The pathway consists of three bands, these are the GET band consisting of compulsory schooling and ABET that is equivalent to compulsory schooling, the FET band and the HET band. According to a policy document: 'a large proportion of ABET learners in various learning contexts will progress through the levels with the aim of achieving a GETC in order to enter further education or training in the FET band of NQF Levels 2-4' (A qualification and assessment system for ABET, pg 1.18). It seems the policy makers are confident that ABET learners will pursue the attainment of the GETC.



However a key issue is not simply vertical learning progression but also the integration of education and training and this I understand rather as a horizontal learning achievement. 'Integration' is one of the major elements of the NQF principles. The SAQA Act states the creation of an integrated national framework first in the NQF objectives (1995, Clause 2). Furthermore, the ministerial Committee for development work on the NQF (1996) states the importance of an integrated approach in "Discussion Document Lifelong Learning Through A National Qualification Framework" as follows:

the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in South Africa presents our nation with exciting opportunities to reconstruct and develop our current education and training systems into a system that reflects an integrated approach which addresses the learners' and nation's needs. (pg 4)

As early as 1992 the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) and the Education Renewal Strategy emphasised the importance of integrating general education and vocational training into a coherent system. (pg16)

... establishes the basis for an integrated approach to education and training as part of a human resources development policy aimed at integrating the theory with the practice, and the academic with the vocational. (pg 21)

In other words, the integration of education and training should occur simultaneously with meeting the requirements of the rules for certificates to be obtained according to the policy. This 'integrated' approach appears to be taking place at several levels. Firstly, learning areas are subjects to be integrated. To obtain certificates, for example, ABET learners must satisfy requirements according to rules of combination across three learning categories; "fundamental", "core" and "elective" based on unit standards for ABET. To facilitate disadvantaged learners' progression, there are challenges in terms of opening up opportunities for those whose educational opportunities were denied due to apartheid, namely the recognition of prior learning. However this has not yet been formalised.

Secondly, educational institutions are subject to integration within the same educational band and between different bands. Due to the past segregation of educational institutions and training institutions, these had different missions depending on their

compliance with legal frameworks. For example technical colleges (future the FET colleges) operated differently under House of Assembly, Delegates, Representatives or Department of Education and Training. Under the NQF, all technical colleges are to integrate education and training equally. Furthermore, regarding institutions in different bands, the ABET institutions were academic subjects-oriented, especially literacy education whereas FET institutions (currently technical colleges) are vocational training-driven. The integration of education and training has not been practised in either of these bands. The requirements for management based on each institution's mission towards society, were completely different. However since the inception of the NQF, they are required to integrate and to provide integrated education.

### 2.3. Issues of educational policy and the NQF

Having examined the backgrounds and concepts of the NQF, I rationally questioned the feasibility of the NQF. In the radical shift from the old system to the new system in South Africa, educational policy, one of the most contested and complicated areas to control has been carrying a heavy load. By reviewing policy documents, it seems that policy makers in South Africa know what should be changed at macro level. However it is doubtful whether they have prioritised the important and urgent issues and the manner in which they embark on the process of changing strategically (de Clercq, 1997:143) and these are highly depend on planning and managerial skills of policy makers. In this section, I summarise the issues of the NQF.

#### 2.3.1. Reproduction of discrimination within policy as discourse

As I read it, policy as discourse connotes and articulates power relations within the policy. There are some arguments that the NQF reproduces discrimination. de Clercq (1997) argues that educational policies favour the privileged education sector, reproduce discrimination and are exclusive of the disadvantaged, only indirectly addressing the needs of the rest, although it advocates redress of past inequity. She argues this is because of faulty assumptions in policy and the policy process, analysis and evaluation. Regarding these arguments, what I recalled from my preliminary

survey was a sense of the exclusion of adult learners from the formal educational system, the NQF. There was a certain discourse amongst providers of exclusion of adult learners, for example from the future FET colleges in comment like “it is too late for them to cope with theoretical studies”, and from the integrated approach by saying “it is too early for learners at ABET level 1 and 2 to learn skills training because their literacy competency is not yet enough to do so”. I then expanded my question to ask whether adult learners have a voice within the NQF or not, and whether adult learners have positions for themselves in the NQF or not. Policy as discourse does not allow us to speak what ‘we’ are, but instead policy speaks. If adult learners cannot find their identification in the NQF discourse, although policy documents make a commitment to the participation of all learners, I raise a question: “what form does (the NQF) policy as discourse take?” and “is this the reason why (the NQF) policy as text is ever-floating across a wide range of interpretations?”

### 2.3.2. Dual goals setting

The NQF includes mainly two missions, one is for educational restructuring for economic development, and the other is compensation for past unfair educational provision. de Clercq (1997:138) warns about this problematic goal setting as follows:

the link between education, development and equality is not assumed to occur automatically through the free market (as is argued by the human capital theorists) but through careful state coordination and regulation as well as state-coordinated institutional reforms in the labour market and in the economy. ... an integrated system, as it is introduced in the South African context, is unlikely to achieve its ambitious intentions of promoting at the same time development, effectiveness, redress and equity.

I found that there are many vague assumptions stated in the NQF documents. Terms used in these documents such as ‘skill’ and ‘need’ are not too clear. Firstly, in terms of ‘skill’, there is a very vague definition of skills in terms of training. One of the goals of the NQF is the production of flexible human resources for competition in a globalising world. However there is not yet a clear cut consensus on the notion of skills. The debates about skills, whether specific skill (embedded in human capital theory), generic

skill (embedded in institutional theory) or a combination of them should be taken, have not settled (Sobel, 1982, Blaug, 1985). The NQF is a specific skills-driven framework, however policy documents indicate flexibility and cumulation of different kind of skills acquisition as well. There is an unsolved debate about whether skills are to be interpreted narrowly, so-called “hands-on” type of skill; or widely and deeply what can be called “cognitive skill”. Furthermore, what makes it more difficult to define or direct skills training provision is that policies attempt to address both local needs and pressures from globalisation. The dual goal setting within the NQF troubles itself to define skills in this context.

Secondly, there is no concept of the “common needs” of the public that should be reflected in policies. For example, the purposes of learning among adult learners are diverse, more various than young learners in formal schooling. It is significant to visit Green’s work on three European planning strategies for skills training provision. He introduces France, Germany and the UK that practise respectively, a state-led model, a social partnership model and a market-led model. Besides those national models, the EU model was introduced due to the fact that global trends urged European countries to reform their qualification framework and skills provision as well. However, Green (2000:6) argues that each nation is in their own context, namely social, cultural and historical background. Although they are provided with a well-planned solo system, the EU model, in the process of practising the model, there are inevitable processes of screening the model in their context so that the model would be adjusted to their context. He argues that:

... lifelong learning systems are likely to remain stubbornly national despite the centripetal forces generated by globalisation and supra-national political organization. Education systems tend to be highly path-dependent, partly because of the strong influence exercised by national cultures and political traditions, and partly because they are embedded, particularly at the post-compulsory level, in networks of relations with labour markets and industrial structures, and these have not yet converged within the EU. (pg 6)

Considering the South African context: Does South Africa have such a coherent unified path in which common needs among all participants are embedded? Although policy documents boast a unified system in theory, practice has not caught up with the ideal. It is as if sowing seeds on ground that has not been levelled well enough.

What makes addressing skills and needs more difficult is dual goal setting within the dual goals. For example, regarding the goal for the economic development, NEPI (1992:9) explains a dilemma in terms of two types of needs as follows:

clearly the dual strategies of 'export-oriented industry restructuring' and 'satisfying basic needs' will require specific and differentiated VET (vocational education and training) policies' to develop the national economy of South Africa.

In South Africa, adult learners are not always workers, further, learners at main stream schools are not always potential workers due to economic crisis. What I learnt from this is that the kind of skills required for the global market and local market must be completely different. McGrath (2000:71) argues "globalisation was seen as bringing both opportunities and threats and as requiring a dual focus on international competitiveness and local basic needs". In other words, South Africa may need to focus on high skills training for attracting the global market besides probably low skills training for the local market into which high technologies have not yet been introduced.

### 2.3.3. Readiness of institutions towards an integrated system

What makes an integrated approach most difficult is the disparity of education and training institutions that had been racially divided and fragmented and had different missions in the past education system. There are two kinds of integration at institutions that should be taking place to comply with the integrated approach, one is within institutions in the same band, for example among technical colleges (future FET colleges), and the other is between institutions across bands, for instance, between ABET and FET.

Regarding the first kind of integration, firstly, McGrath (1997:5-10) explains how the technical colleges have been operating differently in terms of funding and curriculum, how the past segregated and rigid mission of training provision has been inadequate for actual skills needs. Institutions' management capacities and attitudes are various and complex. McGrath (1997:6) argues a tension emerging among educational institutions that have different historical backgrounds and roles in education and

training in the process of reconstruction and the movement towards the formation of new technical colleges under the FET Act as follows:

Many institutions owe their existence to political rather than economic considerations. In so far as they remain important elements in local and regional power struggles, their rationalisation becomes highly problematic.

It reminds me of the difficulty of amalgamation of technical colleges in the Western Cape because it is socio-political revolutionary restructuring and recognised as an introduction of new power relations (see Chapter 4, interview with the Chief Planner for Technical College Education for detail).

Secondly, institutions across different bands should be integrated. For example, the ABET and FET institutions are required to integrate education and training in the same matter, although seemingly, the ABET institutions tend to be education-oriented, whereas the FET institutions are training-driven. The comments from the ABET and FET providers I mentioned in the previous section represent the different perspectives towards adult learners and their educational provision.

#### 2.4. Conclusion – linking theoretical framework and my study

Having reviewed policy documents, policy analysis and some criticism towards the NQF, I establish a theoretical framework for this study. To conclude this chapter, the issues that I interrogate in this study are:

- What kinds of faulty assumptions were made in terms of the NQF policy framework in comparison with learners' interests,
- What kind of interpretation of policy "as text" is happening on the ground in terms of the integration of education and training,
- Whether discrimination is reproduced in the educational field and
- How the above impacts on policy itself

by investigating the current practices of integration in the adult education field.

At the same time, I attempt to address the common needs among adult learners, that policy should respond to and represent, by a 'backward-mapping' approach since. In this light de Clercq (1997:144) argues that:

what is needed from the national educational policy makers is a shift towards more evolutionary policy planning which aims to improve the fit between the intention of the policy change and the conditions on the ground, to blend top-down policy initiative and bottom-up participation and to promote continuous interaction between all policy actors.

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## Chapter 3 Methodology

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The purpose of this study is to examine the feasibility of the integration of education and training by comparing what NQF policies outline and what is happening amongst adult education institutions on the ground. However, because of the uniqueness of this study having two phases, I engaged mainly two methodologies, firstly a qualitative survey in Phase I and secondly, a quantitative survey in Phase II. In the following section, I explain the methodologies I took and the reasons for these choices according to the different phases.

### 3.1. Phase I

In Phase I, my tasks were to understand adult education in the South African context and to examine the feasibility of the tentative research question. I undertook three activities in order to do so. Firstly, I reviewed the relevant policy documents to understand the key concepts of the NQF. Secondly, I visited adult education sites, observed classes and interviewed learners and providers to understand the practice. Thirdly, I interviewed government officials to understand the state's perspective on relevant policies and issues in adult education. In the following sections, I explain methodologies I used in each activity. In addition, although I present and analyse the detailed data from Phase I in Chapter 4, I present findings from Phase I briefly in this section in order to show how I arrived at the final research question, which emerged from the findings of Phase I.

#### 3.1.1. Review of policy documents

To understand adult education in South Africa, I firstly started reviewing relevant policy documents on the NQF, ABET and FET, including acts, white papers, green papers and discussion papers. The reason why I reviewed not only the NQF but also the ABET and the FET documents, was that I had a tentative research question about the



articulation between ABET and FET at this point.

Having reviewed the documents, I learnt that there was a flood of policy documents seemingly because the entire education system was being restructured and the policies for this have been in the process of modification, debate and phase-in or pilot implementation. Furthermore, since I started to visit sites simultaneously, I was overwhelmed by finding incessant changes, how the sites have been operating differently from what policies envisaged, how the sites have been “in the air” because of the rapid changes, and how the new policies affected the sites. The extent of compliance with policies and new systems differed radically between sites. Therefore I was perplexed about which period of policy documents I needed to draw on in my study.

I realised that I had to define the usage of those policy documents. I then decided to use the most updated documents and to focus on the stable part of policies because I understood that the debates and modifications were rather about the implementation process than the policy concepts themselves. The stable part of the policies refers to the key concept of lifelong learning that the NQF promotes, and the relationship between ABET and FET. In the early stage of Phase I, since ABET and FET are part of the NQF band, I set the NQF key concepts in the centre of my study and reviewed the ABET and FET documents as a tool to examine the articulation between two bands, that was my first research question.

### 3.1.2. Site visits

While reviewing policy documents, I started visiting sites to understand what was happening on the ground. Firstly, I sampled out sites. Secondly, I visited those sites to observe classes, and thirdly, I had brief and fairly unstructured interviews with learners and providers.

#### 3.1.2.1. Sampling

I tried to sample sites as widely as possible to ensure impartiality because of my belief that policy must be applied to all. Furthermore, by doing so, I aimed to find

commonalities and disparities across various kinds of sites. The following elements were taken into consideration for sampling;

- historical background,
- the NQF band of provider and
- characteristics of learners.

Historical background is concerned with the sector of provision, whether it is state, companies, NGOs/CBOs, Municipalities, Religious, and Civil organisations. Regarding the NQF band, providers were equally sampled out from the ABET and FET bands. Most of the providers are registered as ABET and/or FET (currently as a technical college) except one provider offering only vocational training. There were two reasons why I included the vocational training provider. Firstly, most of their learners were my target group; disadvantaged, over-aged adult learners. There was no reason why I should exclude them from the sample. Secondly, although they are currently a non-registered educational provider, they eventually will have to register with SAQA and to be situated in a certain band of the NQF. Thirdly, since this provider is vocational training-oriented, I expected to be able to make a comparison with other providers. Learners' characteristics such as age, gender, occupational status and purpose of learning were taken into consideration because I assumed that the shape of the articulation might depend on learners' characteristics. In addition to these three elements, I attempted to find the ABET and FET sites that have a linkage in terms of learners' progression and transition to examine how both sites articulated. There was only one pair of ABET and FET sites that had the linkage.

In total, there are four ABET providers (Site A, B, C, D), two ABET and FET providers (Site E, F), three FET providers (Site G, H, I), one vocational training provider (Site J). Sites D and G have the linkage regarding learners' progression and transition from ABET to FET. I collected data of ABET learners from five providers (Site A, B, C, D, E), of FET learners from four providers (Site F, G, H, I) and of vocational training from the vocational training provider (Site J).

#### 3.1.2.2. Class observations

By observing classes from ABET level 2 to NQF level 3, I tried to 'feel' the atmosphere and see how adult learners were learning. I had never seen adult education sites operating in the formal sector and it was difficult for me to imagine it.

There were two significant findings. Firstly, I was surprised at adult learners' learning speed because I have understood ABET being equivalent to compulsory education. Most of the time, educators seemed irritated with the slow pace of understanding among learners. Educators often repeated the same instructions and hurried learners to work more quickly by saying, "In the examination, you don't have much time to spend. Please practise working faster". This was more obvious when I observed higher levels of classes.

Secondly, the learning scene differed from site to site depending on the characteristics of providers and learners. The characteristics refer to the atmosphere and environment of providers and classrooms (whether nurturing and warm, or structured and competent), learners' occupational status (whether unemployed or employed), geographical area where providers and learners are situated, band and level of learning.

#### 3.1.2.3. Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to obtain an overview of adult education sites rather than to collect data directly related to my research question. Furthermore, I attempted to confirm what I had seen in the classes by interviewing providers and learners. Therefore the questions I asked learners and providers were very broad and fairly unstructured.

The questions I asked learners were about their

- basic characteristics such as age, gender, occupation, educational level at school and courses / subjects they worked / were working on,
- purpose of learning, goal settings and further learning plans and
- comments on providers.

The questions asked providers consisted of their

- basic characteristics such as the history, registration status and programmes' provision,
- understanding of learners in terms of their learning progression and interest in learning,
- response to the NQF, including goal settings and further plans and
- problems regarding the above contents.

From interviews with learners and providers, there were two important findings. Firstly, an interesting finding from learners was that there were four categories for explaining the purpose of learning, these were 'Matric-mad', 'Feel-good'/'Purpose-unclear' and 'Skills-mad' as I explained in Chapter 1 (section 1.2.1.2. *Four groups of adult learner*). Among them, I was surprised at adult learners' eagerness towards matriculation. It was surprising because I have seen their slow learning pace during class observations. Furthermore, some providers argued the importance of matriculation for employment as strongly as the learners insisted.

Secondly, an important finding from interviews with providers was that the articulation between ABET and FET was not happening yet. In other words, there were few adult learners who had acquired the GETC or equivalent to the GETC and proceeded to further education level yet. Although there are some learners from Site D who transferred to Site G, none of them had satisfied the GETC requirement fully.

Besides these two findings, there were three interesting findings from conducting interviews. Firstly, I found it interesting that the more I visited sites, the more I could obtain further and 'more real' information. The reason why I noted 'more real' is that the answers from learners and providers tended to be idealistic and politically correct until I developed an appropriate relationship with them and had more precise questions. Especially, in the case of learners, I experienced that their answers changed whether educators were with them or not. For example, at the first stage, most of the learners expressed how joyfully they had been learning at each site, but they gradually expressed difficulties and problems they actually had in their learning. Providers also referred to their serious anxieties and problems later, but not during the first contact.

Secondly, answers especially from learners were not consistent. Their answers tended

to be influenced by the atmosphere and the way they were questioned. To reach the real answer, it was necessary to ask questions very carefully. From these two findings, I learned how the environment of the interview, including the relationship between interviewee and interviewer, is important.

Thirdly, I noted that some providers spoke endlessly of the idealistic and politically correct perspectives to a greater extent than I asked. I therefore realised that I needed to avoid that kind of "information flood" in the follow-up survey.

### 3.1.3. Interview with government officials

There were two WCED officials available regarding the policies on which I focused. One was the Chief Planner of ABET, and the other was the Chief Planner of Technical College Education (FET). There was no official in charge of the GETC and the NQF overall. The purpose of interviews with government officials was to confirm what I had studied from policy documents and site visits and to ask about relevant issues.

The questions I asked each official were about the state's

- philosophy and mission of ABET/FET,
- perspective on adult learners and
- current issues and challenges for ABET/FET.

There were three important findings from these interviews. Firstly, both officials explained how the implementation process was complicated. They explained their dilemma between policy implementation and practice, and several obstacles that had delayed policy implementation. It was significantly useful to compare policy and practice, and the difficulty of implementation. Since policy implementation in developing countries, in general, takes a longer time if compared to developed countries, the interview with these officials introduced several problematic issues and dilemmas in terms of compliance with the NQF, especially among adult learners. In addition, it presented how policies had been interpreted differently at government level and at ground level.

Secondly, I realised that there was a philosophical disparity between ABET and FET. ABET tends to respond to community needs and to be academic subjects-oriented,

whereas FET tends to respond to industry needs and to be vocational training-oriented. In other words, this was a key issue in relation to the integration of education and training. I realised this was also relevant to the articulation between the two bands. Furthermore I started seeing this problem as interfering with the possibility for articulation.

Thirdly, there were new movements and collaborations beyond the boundary between ABET and FET despite the disparities. This provided evidence of new policy interpretations at government level. Further, this finding provided evidence of the struggles of the officials in the implementation processes.

### 3.2. Articulation between Phase I and Phase II

After the preliminary survey, I realised that I had already answered the tentative research question; "Is articulation between ABET and FET happening among adult learners?" My answer was "no" because I could not find the linkage between ABET and FET in terms of learners' progression in fact. There were very few learners who had met the GETC requirement. Instead of finding articulation, what I found were firstly, the diversity of adult learners in terms of learning pace, interest and goal setting, secondly, the slow implementation of policies, and thirdly, disparity between the ABET and FET philosophies, (academic subject-centred and training-centred respectively) that seemed to inhibit articulation.

Between Phase I and II, I was obliged to start interrogating why the articulation was not happening. I realised that the key issue was 'disparity' at several levels. At the level of learners, although the NQF envisaged integration of education and training, learners showed a certain tendency towards either 'Matric-mad' or 'Skills-mad' as the purpose of learning. It seemed that the more they tend to be 'Matric-mad', the more learners progress slowly in relation to the pace of learning. The more they tend to be 'Skills-mad', the more they distanced themselves from academic studies. Another disparity was at the institutional level. The philosophy of the ABET providers tends to be academic subject-oriented whereas the FET providers tend to be training-oriented. Furthermore, at government officials' level, the mission of ABET is to respond to community needs; on the contrary the mission of FET is to respond to industry needs.

I presumed that the articulation was not happening because one of the key concepts of the NQF, an integrated system, is not happening at several levels. Then, my final research question shifted towards the issue of integration of education and training.

To make a hypothesis, I drew in four categories of the purpose of learning because these categories symbolised 'education' and 'training'. For example, 'Matric-mad' struck me as a symbol of 'education'-oriented purpose, and 'Skills-mad' symbolised 'training'-driven purpose. I understood these categories as adult learners' needs and expectations towards education in a broader sense.

Then I set up the final research question as,

"What is the feasibility of the integration of education and training, through the promotion of the GETC, as envisaged within the NQF discourse?"

A hypothesis behind the question is:

The integration is problematic and not happening in the way the NQF promotes. What is happening on the ground among learners and providers is inclined towards either education or training. The majority of adult learners and providers are 'Matric-mad' and learners are struggling to progress through their studies.

### 3.3. Phase II

Due to the shift in the research question, the research angle of looking into policies and interviewing providers and learners, experienced a slight change between Phase I and II. For example, I reviewed policy documents from the 'articulation' point of view in Phase I, but I later revisited those documents from the 'integration' viewpoint. Regarding interviews with learners, providers and officials, these were more about vertical learning progression, but this later became horizontal learning progression and a combination across wide learning levels and bands. However, it is important to note that this change did not affect the study because the research question had been overturned but narrowed down and focused. The change rather assisted the process of narrowing down the research question. The narrowed-down question seemed to provide a possible explanation for the answer to the initial research question in relation to the reason why the articulation between ABET and FET was not happening.

To interrogate the feasibility of the integration of education and training that the NQF promotes, I set up questionnaires for learners and providers to collect mainly quantitative data that allowed me to examine how the integrated system was being implemented in practice. It is important to note that I conducted interviews with learners and providers in Phase 11 drawing from the experience I had in the preliminary survey. This confirms the importance of both qualitative and quantitative data collection to confirm data credibility and to sustain congruence between questions and answers.

The purpose of the questionnaires was to understand;

- what adult learners' needs/interests (reason why they decided to learn and are interested to learn further) are,
- how providers estimate learners' needs/interests,
- how providers try to respond to the needs/interests and
- how providers understand their mission and feasibility of the integration of education and training.

By comparing these data and policies, I attempted to examine the feasibility of the integration of education and training that the NQF promotes.

In the following sections, I explain firstly, sampling and the limitations of sampling. Secondly, I introduce the content of the questionnaires briefly. Thirdly, I explain how I coded the qualitative data.

#### 3.3.1. Sampling and limitations

Basically I used the same samples from Phase I, but there were some exceptions due to unexpected events taking place in the sites during the shift between Phase I to Phase II. In terms of providers, for example, the principal of Site F changed, so I had to confirm the congruence of the information I obtained from both principals. In some cases, I had struggled to arrange a meeting with the persons in charge of providers at Site B and C, so I was unable to collect data directly from them. However I do include data from these sites into this study because I gained enough information from meeting educators on the sites and the external educational consultant who works for them.



Regarding learners, the difficulty of scheduling meeting times and the availability of adult learners in my target group meant that, I had to compromise and make some exceptions in terms of their age, I had wanted to only consider learners of thirty years old or older and five learners per site. However, for example there was only one learner who satisfied this requirement at Site H. In total, there are thirteen learners who are younger than thirty and five of them are even younger than twenty-five. Another example is that there were only four learners available at Site E on the day I visited for data collection although five learners are regular attending. It was impossible to predict learners' attendance. On the contrary, at Site B, there were six learners attending class on the day I brought questionnaires and all of them showed interest and were willing to co-operate with my work although I only needed data from five learners. Eventually I decided to use all of their answers in my study with careful handling so that their additional data did not change the result of the analysis.

### 3.3.2. Questionnaire to learners

What I expected from learners' answers to the questionnaires was to understand:

- the reason why they decided to study,
- other subjects/courses they are interested to take besides the subjects / courses they have taken and have been taking and reasons for this. (see Appendix A)

I collected those data across ten sites for the purpose of finding commonalities or particular phenomena according to the characteristics of sites and learners. To make the comparison easier, I chose quantitative data collection so that I could use statistical data analysis. However the learners' answers to the questionnaire were very different per person and this required decoding by interviewing them afterwards.

In addition, I noted that the language barrier had an effect. Although fluent in English, I am a Japanese speaker and in some cases, it was not easy to communicate with learners in English. Therefore I had to ask educators' assistance although I tried to avoid providers' involvement and influence on learners' answers, but this was inevitable. In some cases, I used translators to translate answers written in Afrikaans and Xhosa into English. To minimise the influence of providers' involvement and the interpretation by the third person, I set up scaling questions so that learners circle numbers instead of writing sentences. I realise that this format may have been

unfamiliar to some learners, but with some degree of mediation, I felt that the information they provided was accurate.

### 3.3.3. Interview with learners

This follow-up interview with learners in the quantitative data collection was inevitable. Learners tended to choose all of the reasons for learning as the most important one, so I had to ask them to differentiate the reasons. Sometimes learners did not understand what questions meant, so I needed to assist them to answer each question precisely. The interview and questionnaire took place simultaneously for these reasons. It is important to note that I realised that the follow-up interview was essential because a number of modifications were needed.

### 3.3.4. Questionnaire to providers

I intended to establish providers' awareness of learners' needs/interests and their mission to respond to this by asking;

- basic information (e.g. subjects they offer, level of the subjects and brief pass rate of the subjects),
  - other subjects / courses including the level they strongly feel their institution should offer and reasons for this,
  - their estimated reason for why adult learners wanted to learn,
  - their recognition of their mission in relation to the reason above,
  - recognition of the feasibility of education and training and
  - changes they feel need to be made in order to integrate education and training.
- (see Appendix B)

The reason why I used a questionnaire was to get clear answers from providers and to avoid a flood of idealised responses. As I mentioned before providers tend to talk a lot and to make politically correct comments, but once they have to write down these comments they have difficulty doing this, although this was not the case throughout.

3.3.5. Interview with providers

As mentioned before, providers seemed to prefer to respond verbally, and not in writing. There are several reasons why I interviewed them in addition to the questionnaire. I assumed they would experience frustration with the questionnaire because it was a written document, so the interview played a role in releasing their frustration and confirming what they had meant in the written section.

3.3.6. Coding of qualitative data

The main purpose of the survey in Phase II was to collect quantitative data, especially for the purpose of examining what kind of combination of subjects are taking place according to the rules of combination. However, I faced an immense difficulty in categorising subjects because of the gap between the title of subjects and the content. I had to come back, therefore, to the idea of the GETC proposed by the NQF. However, because of the ambiguity in the categories of subjects that official documents outline, I realised that I have to categorise those subjects according to what I have seen in practice. For example, the ratio of Fundamental, Core and Elective for the Unit Standards-based GETC proposal and learning areas is:

Categories of Learning	%
Fundamental:	30
- Language, Literacy and Communication	
- Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Science	
Core:	45
- Natural Sciences	
- Technology	
- Human and Social Sciences	
- Economic and Management Sciences	
- Arts and Culture	
- Life Orientation	
Elective:	25
- Field/Sub-Field of Learning	

(A qualification and assessment system for ABET, 2000:1.21)  
Table 1: GETC proposal ratios of three learning categories

Furthermore, the definition of those three categories are:

Fundamental:	means that learning which forms the grounding or basis needed to undertake the education, training or further learning required in obtaining of a qualification. (SAQA Regulations, Act 58 of 1995)
Core	means that compulsory learning required in situations contextually relevant to the particular qualification. (SAQA Regulations, Act 58 of 1995)
Elective:	means a selection of credits at the level of the NQF specified which relates to the interest of the learner. It also refers to the specialisation category. (SAQA Regulations, Act 58 of 1995) An elective is determined by the purpose of the qualification within which an individual has a choice from the relevant fields and sub-fields of learning. In most cases, this category would make provision for the "world of work" or reflect the "T" component of ABET.

(A qualification and assessment system for ABET, 2000, pp1.23 – 1.24)

Table 2: GETC proposal definitions of three learning categories

Referring to these definitions, my attempt to categorise subjects into three learning areas was based on two factors rather than subject titles that educational providers use. One is the content of subjects, and the other is learners' perspectives and expectations towards subjects. For instance, 'Computer study' seemed to fit under the Core as part of technology; however the computer classes I observed at sites were either vocational training, or sometimes they seemed to be simply computer literacy and should therefore be categorised under the Fundamental. Learners in these subjects were learning computer practice (opening/typing/saving/closing files) rather than theoretical study of computers. Another example is 'Entrepreneurship'. I noted that providers tended to categorise Entrepreneurship and 'Business skills' into the Elective category although the content seemed to be accommodated across and within Elective subjects. In other words, unless a learner is a business consultant, the knowledge and skill obtained from these subjects cannot be an independent skill. These are rather complementary to other skills that are directly related to the "world of work". In the same way, 'Accounting' can be both Core and Elective depending at the level of learning. In general, Accounting is considered as part of SMMEs (Small Medium Micro Enterprises) in the ABET band, but it can be a Core subject in the Further Educational band. Regarding learners' perspectives, if learners understood and expected the subject as vocational training, I categorised them under Elective.

## Chapter 4 Data presentation and analysis (Phase I)

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In this chapter, I will present and analyse data I collected from Phase I. There are two reasons why I present the Phase I data. Firstly, although Phase I was a preliminary survey, I attempt to merge data from Phase I and II because the data from Phase II are deeply embedded in the characteristics of providers and learners at each site, and government's statements and attitudes. Secondly, I shaped the final research question on the basis of the Phase I data, especially in relation to focusing on what it is that makes the articulation between ABET and FET difficult.

In what follows, I introduce each site including the background of the establishment, current educational provision and characteristics of their learners. Secondly, I present the data from interviews with three government officials.

### 4.1. Introduction of sites

In the following section, I will introduce the background of the establishments and describe the current situation between May to October of 2000, when I visited them at each site. Because the system surrounding the educational providers and learners has been changing day by day, some of the information may not still be applicable, however I present them as they were when I visited them. At the end of each site's introduction, I present a table that shows the availability of the learning areas, ratio of Fundamental, Core and Elective to show the present circumstances and the subject and level of learners who answered the questionnaire in Phase II ('Target group'). In some cases, especially at technical colleges, there are more subjects available, but these are mostly for what I have termed "non-adult" learners. Since the focus of this study is over-aged, disadvantaged adult learners, I did not count those other subjects available in the institutions, such as Mechanical, Electrical, Maritime and Business and Financial management courses that consist of Mathematics, Engineering science, Trade theory, Logic systems, Management communication and Computerised financial systems at the NQF levels 1 to 6. Another criterion for excluding these courses was the fees. The fees for these courses are much more expensive compared to the

subjects and courses of the adult learners that I studied.

#### 4.1.1. Site A

This institution has run ABET programmes for Cape Town city council workers for six years. There are approximately 120 registered learners and seven educators. To enter the institution, applicants must be municipality workers and “must be interested in learning”. All applicants take placement tests to be assigned to an appropriate level. English Communication, Numeracy and Life-skill (compulsory) programmes at levels 2, 3 and 4 are available, however there is a high concentration on Communication (English). Afrikaans and Xhosa Communication classes were to be made available after my visit.

Learners’ average age is between thirties and forties. The majority of learners are labourers. Sixty-five percent of them are Coloured and the rest are African. Most learners are male because ninety percent of jobs at the municipality were occupied by males, but the number of female learners has increased recently.

The pass rate is about fifty-five percent and the dropout rate is not more than forty percent but I was told that approximately half of them drop out because of “laziness” and other “undesirable reasons”. The pass rate fluctuates because of unstable levels in the standard of the examination and the strictness of markers of the Independent Examinations Board (IEB), so the results depend upon the year and of the learning area in which learners took the examination. This institution has sent some learners who completed ABET level 4 to an Electrics training course provided by municipality, however learners could not cope with it well because higher literacy skills were required to follow the course.

The practitioner raised four significant issues. Firstly, over-expectations among learners. He claimed that it is educators’ role to open up learners’ view but at the same time to fill in a gap in the landscape of learners. Secondly, there is a missing linkage between their learning and work. He pointed out that their learning often does not have a linkage with their work and that affects their motivation to learn. Thirdly, learners sometimes feel that they are intimidated to come to the classes to ensure job security. Finally, the retention of learning centres. The provision of adult learning centres depends on political decisions, regardless of the fact that there are adult learners who

need these centres. A centre in a suburb of Cape Town closed down suddenly although there were learners attending the ABET classes and these learners had to stop learning.

Site A	Fundamental	Core	Elective							
Number of subjects:	4	1	0							
Ratio of subjects:	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%							
Subjects detail:	Category	Subject title	ABET				NQF			N/A
			1	2	3	4	2	3	4	
	Fundamental:	Afrikaans	v							
		English		v	v	v				
		Xhosa		v	v	v				
		Numeracy		v	v					
	Core:	Life-skill								v
	Elective:	N/A								
Target group:	English (ABET 4)									

Table 3: Site A

#### 4.1.2. Site B

This site is run by a community college in a fruit farming area approximately 150Km away from the centre of Cape Town where Afrikaans is the dominant language. The college offers FET programmes on the campus and ABET programmes at a library near a small township. In FET, relatively younger learners who have received education in compulsory schooling and relatively older learners who have been employed in agriculture, are registered. Most of them are employed on farms and have financial support from their employers. Their purpose of learning is, according to the educator, for promotion on the farm. The college has tried to send their graduates to HE but it seemed there were “some issues related to the recognition of prior learning”. In doing so, the college has tried to comply with unit standards. They claimed that they had to translate unit standards in agriculture into their “own language rather than the state’s language” so that they “could understand the contents”.

On the other hand, in ABET, most of the learners are forty years or older and self-financed. In 1995, the ABET programmes had been run as a project. Learners have had no or little compulsory schooling. Most of them are employed but not on farms. For my study, I decided to focus on the latter learners because they seemed to fit my definition of adult learners more closely than the former learners did.

This site offers an Afrikaans Communication programme at ABET levels 1, 2 and 3, twice in a week. There are not more than ten learners registered and six to eight of

them attend classes regularly. Some unique elements were observed. For example, they do not use the IEB examination paper to evaluate learners and, instead, educators designed their own examination papers. The pass rate is a little under eighty percent in 1997 and 1998 in all levels. The reason why they do not use the IEB examination paper is because “learners do not necessarily need to progress to higher and further education” and they simply “want to be literate”, according to the educator. When I asked learners the reason why they decided to learn casually, their immediate answers were “to read the Bible”. I found that the atmosphere of the class was always warm and learners help each other during the classes. Also, they seem to enjoy reading and writing letters.

Site B	Fundamental	Core	Elective								
Number of subjects:	1	0	0								
Ratio of subjects:	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%								
Subjects detail:	Category	Subject title	ABET				NQF				N/A
			1	2	3	4	2	3	4		
	Fundamental:	Afrikaans		v	v						
	Core:	N/A									
	Elective:	N/A									
Target group:	Afrikaans (ABET 2, 3)										

Table 4: Site B

#### 4.1.3. Site C

This site is a factory offering ABET classes to its employees. The factory is situated close to Cape Town and has approximately 1800 employees. The ABET programmes were introduced and monitored by an educational consulting NGO that claims it has been involved in the “empowerment of workers”. From the factory’s side, the programmes are to provide employees with fundamental literacy skills up to ABET level 4 so that employees would be trainable for multi-skilling at a later stage. On the other hand, employees say that they attend the ABET programmes, not only for occupational purposes but also for life-betterment purposes, in other words for obtaining a positive self-image.

The ABET programmes are open to any employees who are interested in learning. Forty-one out of 250 employees who indicated an interest in the ABET programmes are currently attending classes. The learners’ age ranges between thirty-five to fifty. One class consists of about 12 to 15 learners. A large proportion of the learners is



currently female, Coloured Afrikaans speakers. They attend classes once in a week in the morning. Educators are employees of the factory, who teach the ABET programmes on a part-time basis. The factory supports their in-service training as ABET educators.

There seems to be an expectation that the employees have more opportunity for promotion if they have acquired literacy at ABET level 4. However, it has not been proved how much their promotion relies on their learning progression regarding literacy skills. Most of the learners raised promotion as a target of learning, but at the same time they acknowledge that overcoming an inferiority complex is another important reason for learning. From the class observations, I noted that learners are relaxed and enjoyed participating in classes. I did not recognise anything forcing or urging them to learn and progress from the factory's side.

Site C	Fundamental	Core	Elective
Number of subjects:	1	1	0
Ratio of subjects:	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Subjects detail:	Category	Subject title	ABET
			1 2 3 4
	Fundamental:	English	v v
	Core:	Life-skill	
	Elective:	N/A	
Target group:	English (ABET 4)		

Table 5: Site C

#### 4.1.4. Site D

This institution is situated in a semi-rural area approximately 50Km from Cape Town within a large farming community, but also including many small industries and businesses. The area is predominantly a White area, while both Coloured and Africans speak Afrikaans as their first language. In the early 1990s, one parent had introduced the concept of learning for empowering people and provided literacy programmes to about fifty learners who were domestic workers. The purpose of the programmes was not only to promote literacy but also to build up the life-skills and confidence among people in the community. Later, this institution adopted the concept and established the project as an NGO adult learning centre.

There are approximately 100 learners registered. Most of them are Afrikaans speaking -Coloureds and the rest are Xhosa -speaking Blacks. Age ranges between sixteen to

eighty and most of them are either unemployed or engaged in casual jobs. There used to be slightly more female learners, taking up approximately two thirds of all learners currently enrolled. Many of them are single mothers with low income (R40 – R60 per day). Currently the institution provides Communication, Numeracy, Computer and Technology programmes at ABET levels 1 to 4. They attend two to three classes in the evening after work. The institution provides learners' transportation using local taxies. Some learners travel more than an hour to get to the classes after work. A prominent characteristic of this institution is that learners seem to truly enjoy learning. I understand this is because of the institution's enormous effort to provide a nurturing and warm environment for them. The co-ordinator of the institution often mentioned that they have tried to respond to the community's needs in terms of provision of learning areas. However, at the same time, she mentioned the difficulty of doing so, due to the diversity of the community. To achieve their mission, 'to open up opportunities to learn for adult learners', the institution has to have a good retention rate. For this to happen, the institution has to provide what learners are interested in. Therefore the institution seems to go through trial and error processes to find the subjects that learners are interested in, and in doing so retain learners. Another important and very recent effort that the institution has made is to provide linkages or pathways for learners who are interested in progressing to further levels. There is a technical college near this institution (Site G) where learners from Site D continue learning afterwards.

Besides the institution's efforts, there are some dilemmas. Not many potential learners access Site D, although they have been established and advertised through radio and newspapers for a long time.

A more serious issue is that many learners stop learning after ABET level 3 and only a few continue to level 4. It seems that there is a wide gap between the content of ABET levels 3 and 4. In addition, learners in literacy classes tend to be older because younger learners have higher educational levels. Older learners tend to register for lower levels and progress more slowly than the younger learners. The co-ordinator mentioned that there is a gap between the standards that the NQF envisages and what adult learners actually can achieve within their limited time, and other restrictions that learners in compulsory schooling usually do not have, for example family concerns. According to her, although the fundamental concept of the NQF is good, it seems enormously difficult to follow the idea especially among institutions and educators with

poor resources and experience.

Another dilemma is that although learners progress to further educational levels after this institution, the sudden change from a nurturing environment to the academically-oriented structured environment at other institutions sometimes blocks their progression and motivation.

Site D	Fundamental	Core	Elective							
Number of subjects:	4	1	1							
Ratio of subjects:	66.0%	17.0%	17.0%							
Subjects detail:	Category	Subject title	ABET				NQF			N/A
			1	2	3	4	2	3	4	
	Fundamental:	Afrikaans	v	v	v	v				
		English	v	v	v					
		Xhosa	v	v						
		Numeracy	v	v						
	Core:	Technology				v				
	Elective:	Computer				v				
Target group:	Technology (ABET 4)									

Table 6: Site D

#### 4.1.5. Site E

This site is located off a busy street of a medium size business area, approximately 20Km from the centre of Cape Town. It is a predominantly White area but today, it is multi-cultural in terms of ethnic groups and cultures. The institution, which is a technical college, has up to now, been known as an “engineering studies” provider for mostly younger learners and should become an FET institution soon. There are approximately 3000 learners in engineering studies and 400 learners in business studies. The technical college developed bridging courses to fill up the gap between applicants’ literacy and numeracy level (ABET level 3 to 4) and the appropriate level to engage in engineering studies. However most of the learners are ‘second chance’ teenage learners and not adult learners as I had defined. Four years ago, they introduced an ABET programme as a pilot project for the purpose of “responding to community needs” in their estimation. Then the college became the first technical college that provided ABET programmes.

They run evening classes twice a week where Communication and Numeracy at ABET levels 1 to 3 are available. There is no entry requirement but applicants have to take a placement test to find an appropriate level. There are seven learners registered and

five of them are regularly attending. One educator instructs different levels and subjects in Afrikaans in one class due to the small number of learners. Learners' age ranges from thirties to sixties and they are employed as labourers at a municipality, or in casual jobs. Slightly more female learners are enrolled.

Learners' motivation is high, sometimes even too high, according to the educator. Learners tend to set their goals beyond their capacities and try to achieve the goals too quickly. . There seems to be an issue of retention of the ABET programme. From the cost effectiveness point of view, the college needs to have more learners to run the course. The content of the current programmes seems to be skimming the surface of a sustainable level.

Site E	Fundamental		Core				Elective				
Number of subjects:	3		0				0				
Ratio of subjects:	100.0%		0.0%				0.0%				
Subjects detail:	Category	Subject title	ABET				NQF				N/A
			1	2	3	4	2	3	4		
	Fundamental:	Afrikaans	v								
		English			v						
		Numeracy			v						
	Core:	N/A									
	Elective:	N/A									
Target group:	Afrikaans (ABET 1), English (ABET 3), Numeracy (ABET 3)										

Table 7: Site E

#### 4.1.6. Site F

This site is situated in one of the big townships of Cape Town. This institution has the longest history in adult education provision (about thirty-years) of all the sites I visited. It was 'established through the Catholic Church to provide educational opportunities, especially to disadvantaged adult learners' (quoted from the mission statement of the institution). The institution has a day school for about 2000 matriculants and a night school for about 1500 adults. Age ranges between sixteen to seventy-five. Compared to other institutions, it seems more fully equipped and stable in terms of subjects' and qualified and experienced educators' availability, enough numbers of educators and learners to sustain the institution and other learning resources and supports. Despite the location, their educational provision transcends community and nationality. There are many learners travelling from distances away to attend classes and some refugees come from other African countries.

There are various subjects available and a high concentration in the Fundamental subjects is not found in this site. The adult learners that are the focus of this study usually register in one to three subjects and attend evening classes. Approximately sixty percent of them are female. Learners' levels are decided on the basis of school reports they bring or what they state verbally to the institution. Learners' characteristics are diverse compared to other sites.

Although the institution seems well equipped and operationally stable, there are some problem areas. The number of students is declining. Staffs claim that there are three reasons for this. One is the increasing crime rate that targets their night school learners. The other is that there is an increasing number of similar institutions, and learners tend to go to closer institutions instead. A further reason is that formal schools have opened their doors to all racial groups since 1994, so younger learners tend to go to formal school rather than night school. Therefore the large proportion of adult learners has become older learners who usually progress more slowly. However, the previous principal mentioned that due to the high dropout rate from formal schools, the number of younger learners might be on the increase again. Although the number of learners is decreasing, it does not mean that there are fewer learners needing education.

Another issue is the relationship between learners' education and job security afterwards. Due to a tendency to provide traditional academic subjects in the past, it is becoming necessary to develop skills training so that learners are available for employment. Although learners do finish their studies at this site, there is little opportunity to secure employment by using what they have currently learnt.

The environment of classes is sometimes not learner-friendly compared to other smaller institutions because of the size of classes. The atmosphere of classes is often very structured, rather than nurturing, to follow up slow pace learners. A staff member made one interesting comment related to learners' motivation comparing younger learners and older learners. The motivation to learn among older learners is higher than among younger learners because the latter is unaware of the past unfairness and biased educational provision under apartheid.

Finally, the institution has run under the ABET band but provided both ABET and NQF 2 to 4 level subjects, funded by the ABET section of WCED. Due to the assessment and reconstruction of the state's budgets, this institution will no longer provide non-ABET programmes under the ABET budget. They have to develop partnerships

between other institutions that operate under the FET budget to maintain the status quo.

Site F	Fundamental	Core	Elective									
Number of subjects:	4	16	11									
Ratio of subjects:	13.0%	52.0%	35.0%									
Subjects detail:	Category	Subject title	ABET				NQF				N/A	
			1	2	3	4	2	3	4			
	Fundamental:	Afrikaans		v						v		
		English	v	v	v	v	v	v	v			
		Xhosa	v	v	v							
		Numeracy	v	v	v					v		
	Core:	Accounting			v		v	v	v			
		Art				v						
		Biblical study					v					
		Biology					v			v		
		Criminology								v		
		Entrepreneurship								v		
		Geography					v			v		
		Health				v						
		History								v		
		Home Economics								v		
		Life skill			v							
		Mercantile law								v		
		Music				v						
		Physiology								v		
		Science			v		v	v	v			
		Technology		v	v		v			v		
		Elective:	Accounting					v			v	
			Business economics				v	v			v	
	Computer				v	v						
	Driving				v							
	Fashion design				v							
	Needlework					v						
	Painting/Craft					v						
	Pottery					v						
	Sewing					v						
	Tourism					v						
	Woodwork					v						
Target group:	Accounting (NQF 3)											

Table 8: Site F

#### 4.1.7. Site G

This site is located in a semi-rural area approximately 50Km from Cape Town within a large farming community including many small industries and businesses. The area is predominantly a White area, and Coloureds and Africans speak Afrikaans as the first

language. This institution was established in the mid-1960's to provide mainly business studies for Whites. The new evening classes are open not only to younger learners, but also to adult learners since 2000. Currently, there are approximately 400 learners registered in day school and 110 learners enrolled in night school.

Learners' ages at the night school range between sixteen and sixty years. The ratio of gender is about equal. Sixty percent of them are unemployed, and the rest are employed and/or engaging in casual jobs. Basically anybody who is sixteen years or older can be accepted. Applicants have to show a school report to prove their educational level, but if they do not have official proof, they have to start from Grade 10 level. Learners register for two to three subjects through out the year and attend evening classes. The provision of subjects is highly focused on business studies rather than traditional academic subjects so that "the learners can start their own business", according to an educator. However the combination of subjects offered is designed to respond to learners who also want to obtain Matriculation certificate, according to their educators.

There are several problem areas as in other sites. Firstly, the dropout rate among adult learners is very high, approximately fifty percent. Staffs claim that there are several reasons for this. Firstly, adult learners tend to register for more subjects than they can manage. Considering their activity during the daytime, it requires immense effort to attend and manage two to three classes per week. They tend to finish their studies as soon as possible, however, ironically, this makes them drop out from courses. The institution will limit the number of subject to two per learner from 2001. In addition, there will be more language classes available because the institution understands that the language issue is one of major reasons for the high dropout rate.

Secondly, the educator mentioned that they acknowledged that they should provide a more nurturing environment for adult learners. For example she mentioned providing snacks and drinks for those who have not eaten all day and had come to classes. Another example is the atmosphere and support in the classroom. As mentioned before, this site has an informal but strong linkage with Site D where learners had previously studied. As soon as they enter this institution, learners experience an academically structured environment. The class size, between twenty to thirty learners, is much bigger than previous ABET classes and the speed of the lecture is much faster. Despite understanding the difficulties they experience, educators seem to feel a dilemma because of the shortage of financial resources. They have to save

from the day school because they do not have a subsidy for the night school. However, it is important to note that educators at this institution do not think the class environment should necessarily change because they believe a 'spoon-fed' environment is not preferable. Evening classes are designed, not only for adult learners, and the learning process should be same regardless of the age of the learner (interview with principal).

Another improvement the educators saw as necessary was that educators need to improve their teaching skills. Because they "were not trained to teach Black students due to the apartheid education system, but there is not support from the state to this matter, so they have to learn through their trial and error" according to the principal. The difference between teaching White and "non-White", especially Black was often emphasised during site visits.

Thirdly, there is an issue of the gap between ABET and FET in terms of the content of learning. One educator mentioned that learners should have learned more life-skill-oriented content. For example learners who have never been in an office do not realise what an 'office chair' is. There is not much that educators can expect learners to have prior knowledge of, and that slows down the classroom operation. There also seems to be an articulation issue of learning content between ABET and further education.

Site G	Fundamental	Core	Elective
Number of subjects:	2	2	2
Ratio of subjects:	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
Subjects detail:	Category	Subject title	ABET 1 2 3 4 NQF 2 3 4 N/A
	Fundamental:	Afrikaans	v v
		English	v v
	Core:	Office skill	v v
		Accounting	v v
	Elective:	Computer	v v v
		Entrepreneurship	v
Target group:	Office practice (NQF 2)		

Table 9: Site G

#### 4.1.8. Site H

This site is located in the largest township in Cape Town as a remote campus of a technical college that is located in a previously White suburb. The technical college



has provided mainly Business studies accommodating approximately 1800 learners and Engineering studies for about 200 learners. This campus initially started to provide high quality science and technology education to the youth for the purpose of matriculation. There are some other subjects and courses that adult learners registered for but most of them dropped out because they could not “cope with theoretical studies”, according to an educator. There might be the possibility of introducing a bridging course for those adult learners but it has not yet materialised. Furthermore, the educator commented that “the technical college still focuses on theoretical programmes but not vocational training”. For that reason, there are not many adult learners in my target group at this site. However, it claims to have a mission to address “community needs” in terms of adult education for development of the township. In 1997, as result of the mission, they started a sewing course as vocational training that they feel meets community needs. This is the reason why the list of subjects below shows only one course, despite the fact that various subjects are available at this institution.

The sewing course is designed for full-time learners who attend class for six months. It has a capacity of fifteen learners. Although the institution claims that this class is at FET level, they do not insist on an academic entry criterion. There is a placement process to test applicants’ capability to handle the sewing machines. The majority of learners are female. It is interesting to note that their course design is focused on training learners so that they will be able to work in a factory rather than to become self-employed. According to an educator, the institution supports learners for employment and the employment rate after the course is approximately fifty percent.

Site H	Fundamental	Core	Elective
Number of subjects:	0	0	1
Ratio of subjects:	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Subjects detail:	Category	Subject title	ABET
			1 2 3 4
	Fundamental:	N/A	
	Core:	N/A	
	Elective:	Sewing	v
Target group:	Sewing (NQF 2)		

Table 10: Site H

#### 4.1.9. Site I

This site was established in a township close to a predominantly White area, in 1999. The institution is part of the technical college described in Site H. The mission of this institution is to “address community needs” and “develop the township and people by interconnecting with and involving the community”. More than 500, mostly unemployed, people from local communities have gained vocational skills at the site, rather than traditional academic subjects. The institution also contributes towards job creation for ex-learners to use and link learners’ skills and jobs with support from some business sectors.

There are several skills-training programmes available such as Bricklaying, Clothing production and Pottery, both full-time and part-time, with courses lasting between one month and five months. Learners come from the township where the institution is situated. They are most likely to be unemployed or engaged in casual jobs. Sixty to seventy percent of learners are female. Age ranges from late teenage to fifties and the majority is between thirty and forty years old. The language of the majority of learners is Xhosa. It is interesting that the site provides a Xhosa language course for non-Xhosa speaking learners and White learners attend the class. The image of adult learning centres in general in the Western Cape is for the “empowerment of disadvantaged people” but this site’s activity extends the meaning of responding to community needs and interests.

To address and respond to community needs, there are some tricky issues. The township consists of seven groups and it makes the institution’s operation sometimes difficult. For example they pay careful attention when distributing profits from sales of goods that learners have produced. The profits should be distributed according to the relationship between those groups to avoid further trouble. It implies that the role of the educational provider, especially when trying to respond to “community needs” requires not only educational activities in a narrow sense but also political and managerial activities and skills.

Furthermore, since the community is diverse it is difficult to accommodate their needs within a single framework. This institution provides ABET level subjects as staff realised learners need to have a certain level of literacy skills even though they are under the FET band. When I visited the site, the ABET subjects were under review therefore levels are not shown in the table below.

Site I	Fundamental	Core	Elective							
Number of subjects:	2	0	7							
Ratio of subjects:	22.0%	0.0%	78.0%							
Subjects detail:	Category	Subject title	ABET				NQF			N/A
			1	2	3	4	2	3	4	
	Fundamental:	Afrikaans								v
		English								v
	Core:	N/A								
	Elective:	Bricklaying					v			
		Clothing production					v			
		Computer						v		
		Driving					v	v		
		Home management					v			
		Pottery					v			
		Upholstery					v	v	v	
Target group:	Bricklaying, Clothing production, Home management (NQF 2), Computer (NQF 3)									

Table 11: Site I

#### 4.1.10. Site J

This site is situated in the biggest township in Cape Town. The institution was established in 1988 under a non-governmental organisation and Christian human development agency. Its mission is “to unlock and develop the God-given potential of all South Africans, especially residents of disadvantaged communities through economic empowerment programmes of skills training for better employment opportunities (quote from Annual report 2000)” to ultimately develop the national economy. It is interesting to note that both this institution and Site H provide sewing courses to disadvantaged adult learners but their goals are very different. Site H, as I mentioned, trains learners to be employed at a factory. On the contrary, this institution trains learners to be self-employed, to complete sewing work by themselves not as a part of an assembly-line system. Regarding finance, unlike other sites, this institution has not complied with any formal framework such as the ABET and FET bands. Therefore their operation depends on donations.

Training courses provided are vocational training-oriented and entrepreneurship, but no academic subjects are available. Most programmes last for approximately two months in length. Each programme has ten to twenty learners. The numbers of male and female learners are about the same. The age groups range from teenage to fifties. All learners are Xhosa speakers and stay in the township. There is no entry requirement but applicants' safety awareness is tested verbally. The manager mentioned that

literacy levels and age do not indicate learners' competency. Sometimes illiterate learners understand instructions better than literate learners because they concentrate harder on listening to the instructor. Approximately sixty percent of ex-learners are employed and/or self-employed. There is a business management counsellor who visits ex-learners to offer support in financial management.

Since the introduction of the new legal framework, this institution has to comply with the SAQA Act, in other words to be registered with SAQA as an educational provider and provide subjects that comply with certain NQF levels. When I visited them, they were in the process of collecting this information.

Site J	Fundamental	Core	Elective							
Number of subjects:	0	1	5							
Ratio of subjects:	0.0%	17.0%	83.0%							
Subjects detail:	Category	Subject title	ABET	NQF				N/A		
			1	2	3	4	2	3	4	
	Fundamental:	N/A								
	Core:	Entrepreneurship								V
	Elective:	Pottery								V
		Sewing								V
		Tourism								V
		Welding								V
		Woodwork								V
Target group:	Sewing, Welding, Woodwork									

Table 12: Site J

#### 4.2. Official perspective of ABET and FET (interviews with government officials)

I set up interviews with two officials from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), one is the Chief Planner for ABET and the other is the Chief Planner for Technical College Education. The latter will be the Chief Planner for FET soon. Both interviews were based on my tentative research question, the articulation between ABET and FET, however these provided me with worthwhile understandings of the state's perspective on both bands, and this helped to narrow down my research question.

#### 4.2.1. Interview with the Chief Planner for ABET in the Western Cape

Before this interview, I had a certain image of adult education in South Africa; that was “adult education = night school” because most of the ABET sites I visited were running evening classes. However, soon after I started the interview, I noticed that the official used the term ‘Community Learning Centre’ instead of ‘night school’ or ‘adult education/learning centre’. This seemed to indicate that her understanding of ABET was to meet community needs.

We discussed several issues that had arisen for me from my site visits. Firstly, I asked about obstacles to ABET learners in general. Secondly, I questioned what challenges were currently taking place. I introduce her answers in the following two sections.

##### 4.2.1.1. What is ABET and what current problems does it face?

As long term issues for ABET, the official pointed out underdeveloped resources and support to learners, for example, availability of learning materials, financial support and transportation, as well as the quality of educators who can respond to the needs of learners and communities.

I raised comments that I had heard several times from sites that “it is too late for adult learners to co-operate with theoretical studies” and that I had noticed a gap between the presumed competence of ABET level 4 learners and the reality. She claimed that “educators must make more effort in terms of methodology of teaching adult learners”.

She pointed out that:

the majority of educators are from mainstream. That is why they are pro-academic subjects, and that is why there are still centres that just ignore national curriculum and unit standards although it has been advised since six years ago.

Her comment on part-time educators reminded me of a comment from the principal of Site F, “it is very difficult to manage nearly hundreds of part-time educators because some are not reliable and responsible”.

She indicated her expectations that educators identify learners’ needs. According to her, the department visits learners in learning sites to address their needs when they

first develop the learning programmes. Now the department expects educators to do the same thing.

We hope that the educator will be able to identify the needs and to also show the learners the progress that he/she has made so far, and educators become so dedicated that they would be able to assist learners needs and integrate learners and programmes.

I questioned the tension between the reality and the system. Her answer to this question presented the state's perspective on formalisation of the system.

This is the unfortunate part. But this is what the government is and it is a system. I understand that learners come to learn, only to be able to read the Bible, but let them into the framework and say to them at least you can progress up to there. (The gap is) exactly the fear that we are living in because we have done unit standards many years ago.

This seemed to indicate her dilemma of being between the system and the realities in the way that ABET has to respond to learners' needs but at the same time, it must comply with the system.

#### 4.2.1.2. What are challenges?

I also asked about a movement among technical colleges (future FET colleges) that technical colleges had raised a protest against the ABET Bill that was passed recently. The reason for their protest was due to this gap. FET colleges did not approve the competency of ex-ABET level 4 learners and proposed to provide ABET level 4 within their own institutions.

As a reason for this protest, she raised the curriculum issue between ABET and FET bands, as an articulation issue. She explained:

whether ABET programmes articulate with the FET programmes will become a curriculum issue. FET is far more vocationally oriented.

This implies there is a curriculum switch between ABET and FET, from academic subject-oriented education to vocational education.

Besides this issue, she argued for the importance of collaboration between both bands and introduced examples of how ABET and FET had been working closely recently. The way of collaboration she seemed to envisage is that:

for instance, if they have particular ways of doing things and if they have sites we could provide jointly, so it's an FET site but there is an ABET programme running on the FET site. That would be perfect. I can see no reason why the two sectors cannot work hand-in-hand.

She also forecast that:

FET will integrate into our centre, so we will have, for instance, a community learning centre that offers ABET but at the same time will have Grade 10 to 12 with technical college qualifications.

She added that:

ABET is a feeder for FET, and those (collaborations) should be institutionalised and systematised.

I added another question relating to the border between ABET and FET; and the confusion of crossing budget utilisation in ABET and FET. She stated that:

ABET institutions can fund FET institutions to promote ABET.

I understood that the state has acknowledged the confusion and has tried to redress it, not in rigid and conventional ways, but rather flexibly in order to bring benefit to both bands.

At the same time that she argued that the collaboration between ABET and FET should be institutionalised and systematised, she also strongly argued that:

adult education does not have to be non-formal. It could be very formal.

I realised that she was trying to bring adult education into the front stage from the back stage. However, I also noted that the state's attitude that she was representing was tending to bring various sizes and shapes of fragments together and put them into a solo system. I found this very formalistic in the face of the diversity of South Africa. Interestingly, she showed her understanding of this tendency but also seemingly has tried to find ways in which this formalisation can be made to work. Finally she argued that:

more and more you become incredibly formal, for instance at the provincial level, what you need to create is policy, regulation, and legislation that are flexible enough. (You need a) Flexible interface when you work with your

learners so that you can meet learners' needs' and policy could be interpreted very flexibly. And I just discovered a couple months ago that they read a policy in a kind of particular kind of orientation.

I understand that this is the way how policy as text is practised.

#### 4.2.2. Interview with the Chief Planner for Technical College Education (FET) in the Western Cape

This official stated that FET is a 'new-born band' and probably experiencing the most drastic restructuring compared to other bands. Historically, the technical colleges have been in the process of amalgamating into six mega public FET colleges. The official repeatedly explained how the amalgamation has been taking place and that the processes are full of trials and tribulations.

##### 4.2.2.1. What is FET and what current problems does it face?

Under apartheid, technical colleges used to play a different role. However, they are now seen as 'an equal partner' in the FET band. They used to be run on a 'supply driven' basis however they should be driven on a 'demand driven' basis. The official explained the new technical college provision as follows:

Principals should be located near the business district so that they can relate closely to the business community that communicates a new set of dynamics to commerce and industries. This is a new demand-driven and a business and industry-friendly provision. Technical colleges must identify their focus of operation, which underpins the economy and development of the province and further the national.

I asked him how FET colleges perform and how learners are supposed to learn at FET colleges. He explained that there is:

appropriate and relevant curriculum provision so that learners will acquire mobility and flexibility by taking relevant subjects that facilitate learners to be qualified for the job.



However I noticed that the concept of FET seems pragmatic rather than comprehensive and well balanced as the NQF envisages. A business and industry-oriented combination of subjects may well be very different from rules of combination specified within the NQF.

According to him, another and perhaps the most important basic concept of FET is to play a role in relation to lifelong learning. He explained the idea of the "horizontal approach" to explain how the FET band promotes lifelong learning as follows:

Only ten to twelve percent, we don't need more than fifteen percent to be involved in higher education. Adding highly qualified academics is not going to get the economy to run a lot. The rest must be skilled workforce. FET is education for the masses and to upgrade the skills level of the entire population. It's the central philosophy of FET.

He continued:

because of the dynamic world in which we are living, the technological revolution and all of that, pre-supposes that our education has a very limited shelf life. Everyone should be maintaining FET certificate-level expertise or school-leaving senior certificate kind of level of expertise. (Learners are) adding on and broadening your skills and keep your basic stock of skills relevant, to obtain mobility and portability as a worker, as human resources.

#### 4.2.2.2. What are challenges?

Probably because the interview took place when he had been busy with amalgamation of technical colleges, he emphasised the difficulty of this process repeatedly, saying:

no institutions have been entering into the merging process willingly because they are in vested interests.

Before this interview, I had obtained the criteria for registration of public FET colleges issued by the Department of Education. In fact, unexpectedly, he was the person who had compiled this form. In this form, there is a list of criteria that colleges are supposed to develop in order to qualify as public FET colleges. Regarding curriculum, for example; the institution has to show that:

- attention has been paid to improve pass rates,
- attention has been paid to widening access opportunities,
- attention has been paid to identifying learners' training needs, and
- attention has been paid to adapting learning/training materials to meet social and economic needs of the learners.

Regarding student support, for example:

- an appropriate admissions procedure is in place,
- learner guidance and counselling services are available,
- learner tracking systems are in place, and
- work placement services are available.

I attempted to ask him what each criterion meant one by one with relation to adult learners but his answer was that:

we are going to use this to all the colleges so that they begin to think about these things. Not so that they can answer positively but so **that they can only begin to interact** (my emphasis) with these issues.

#### 4.2.3. Conclusion

These two interviews confirmed and strengthened the idea of the gap between ABET and FET in terms of curriculum and the needs to which the sector tries to respond. ABET is academic subjects-oriented and tries to respond to community needs, whereas FET is vocational training-oriented and tries to address industry needs. Within ABET there is a gap between the system and the reality. Technical colleges pointed out problems with ex-ABET learners' levels. Unit standards have not been followed precisely in practice because of various reasons. Learners might not be interested in being incorporated into the system, but the state wants to incorporate them. There is diversity amongst technical colleges depending upon their historical backgrounds.

Besides philosophical disparities between ABET and FET, they have collaborated somehow for the effective utilisation of resources. However, the amalgamation of FET colleges has not yet been finalised. State officials were trying to defuse the resistance from colleges by explaining the philosophy of new FET colleges. The criteria

suggested for registration will probably float in the air until the amalgamation is completed. It is obvious that everything is still uncertain, especially in FET band. During the interview with the FET Chief Planner I kept reminding him that my questions were regarding adult learners, because his answers tended to be centred on young learners. To conclude this section, I need to point out that there is currently a disparity between ABET and FET in terms of the target learning group. It appears that at the moment ABET is for adult learners, and FET is for relatively younger learners. This perception will need to change if the idea of progression between bands is to succeed.

University of Cape Town

## Chapter 5 Data presentation and analysis (Phase II)

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In this chapter, I will present and analyse data I collected from Phase II. Firstly, I present and analyse the data in terms of the learners' purpose of learning. At the same time, I attempt to examine how much providers understand learners' interests by comparing the answers from learners and providers. Secondly, I make a comparison between the subjects that learners are interested in taking and the subjects that learners are currently registered for to examine the congruence between them. Thirdly, I present the changes happening among providers to respond to learners' needs/interests.

In Phase II, I sampled eleven providers and asked for co-operation in data collection. Eventually nine providers and fifty learners (five learners from ten providers) answered the questionnaires (see Appendix A and B). I then interviewed those who had submitted questionnaires to clarify and further understand their answers. The sample contains four ABET providers, two ABET and FET providers, three FET providers and one vocational training provider. In terms of learners, twenty-five ABET learners, twenty FET learners and five vocational training learners answered the questionnaire. In the case of the providers, the respondents are in top managerial positions, such as principals, campus directors and managers. While learners were sampled out from ABET level 2 (equivalent to Grade 3 to 5) to FET level 3 (equivalent to Grade 12) and across various subjects/courses they were drawn from as wide a range of learning areas as possible as I showed in the tables of each site in the previous chapter. For example, Literacy (English, Afrikaans), Numeracy, Office skills, Technology, Bricklaying, Home management, Sewing and Welding, In addition, I tried to sample adult learners that I defined in Chapter 1 as my target group. However in some cases, I had to broaden this definition because of availability of learners at sites.

## 5.1. Purpose of learning

In this section, I take data from the Phase II questionnaire to examine the purpose of why adult learners decide to learn. I attempted to find trends depending on learners' characteristics, and at the same time, to compare them with how providers estimate those learners' purposes.

In the questionnaire I estimated eleven purposes of learning that were put to both learners and providers. I then categorised these into 'Matric-mad', 'Feel-good'/'Purpose-unclear' and 'Skills-mad' (see Appendix C and D). The way they answered was to estimate each purpose from the least important (mark 1) to the most important (mark 5). I attempted to exclude purposes that can be recognised in more than one category. For example 'to get promotion' can be understood to get promotion by obtaining higher education, by showing motivation, by obtaining vocational skills training. The 'Matric-mad' refers to purposes that are directly related to education itself and the achievement of a certificate rather than the secondary utilisation of education. 'To get certificate and higher educational level' and 'to get Matric' fall into this category. The 'Skills-mad' represents the vocational training tendency that leads learners to the world of work. 'To be self-employed' and 'to get a job' are used to represent this category. The 'Feel-good' and 'Purpose-unclear' were difficult to explicitly define because they depend highly on how learners **feel** about their learning. I categorised 'to better her/his life', 'to gain positive self-image' and 'to change her/himself as a person' into 'Feel-good'. However 'to make friends', 'to get promotion', 'to read books/newspapers' and 'to help children's/others' homework' were fit into 'Purpose-unclear' because these purposes are ambiguous. Then, in order to avoid using these purposes that I saw as indirectly related to my study, I did not include 'Purpose-unclear' into further data analysis but charts are available (see Appendix C).

### 5.1.1. Occupational status

Regarding occupational status, the gap indicated by unemployed learners between 'Matric-mad' and 'Skills-mad' purposes is more explicit than between employed learners. The employed learners' answers show the highest score for the 'Feel-good' purpose. Overall, the figures show a strong correlation between the need for skills

training and occupational status. Furthermore, they imply the possibility that unemployed learners do not or think they do not have skills to get a job, and expect to obtain skills for employment purposes. It is also very interesting to note that unemployed learners rate 'Feel-good' purposes higher than 'Matric-mad'.

Occupational status	Samples	'Matric-mad'	'Skills-mad'	'Feel-good'
Unemployed	13	2.9	3.8	3.5
Employed	36	3.6	3.9	4.1

Table 13: Purpose comparison per occupational status

#### 5.1.2. Band

By looking at the data per band that learners were enrolled in, I found three phenomena. Firstly, ABET learners tend to choose areas not coded as 'Skills-mad'. Their interest in 'Feel-good' is as strong as 'Matric-mad'. Secondly, FET learners show the strongest purpose as 'Skill-mad'. Both ABET and FET learners' answers seem to reflect the differences in the historical background of each institution; that is 'adult learning centre'/'night school' where literacy education was the main mission, while the mission of 'technical colleges' has up to now been limited to technical education provision. Finally, the result of vocational training learners clearly shows their 'Skills-mad'-oriented tendency rather than 'Matric-mad' purposes.

It is, again, interesting to find both groups show a relatively high tendency towards 'Feel-good' purposes regardless of which band they belong to. It might be possible to say that this is the key commonality among adult learners.

Band	Samples	'Matric-mad'	'Skills-mad'	'Feel-good'
ABET	25	4.1	3.5	4.2
FET	20	3.8	4.2	3.9
Vocational training	5	2.5	4.4	4.1

Table 14: Purpose comparison per educational band - learners

In the following table, I made a comparison between learners' (upper row) and providers' (lower row) answers per educational band to examine how providers understand learners' expectations.

Band		'Matric-mad'	'Skills-mad'	'Feel-good'
ABET	Learner	4.1	3.5	4.2
	Provider	3.4	2.6	1.8
FET	Learner	3.8	4.2	3.9
	Provider	4.0	4.3	2.4
Vocational training	Learner	2.5	4.4	4.1
	Provider	2.5	4.0	1.5

Table 15: Purpose comparison per educational band – learners and providers

Although ABET learners rate 'Matric-mad' and 'Feel-good' purposes higher than 'Skills-mad', interestingly, their tendency towards 'Skills-mad' is stronger than providers' estimation. Compliance with ABET learners' needs seems to require that a wide range of subjects is made available. A prominent finding from the comparison is the congruency in answers between learners and providers of the vocational training site (Site J) in the 'Matric-mad' category. Due to the characteristics of the vocational training provider, it makes sense that their learners did not decide to learn at the site for the 'Matric-mad' purpose. It implies that learners' purposes and providers' directions meet. Similarly, FET learners' and providers' answers are relatively congruent.

Overall, ABET learners' main purpose tends to fit into the 'Matric-mad' category, however their interests in the 'Skills-mad' category is not lower than providers estimate. FET learners tend to expect to acquire skills related to work rather than academic studies. Vocational training learners even more strongly set up their purposes in skills training than FET. Both FET and vocational training providers seem to estimate learners' expectations well. However there is common mis-estimation over 'Feel-good' purpose. 'Feel-good' purposes play a bigger role in the decision-making of learners than providers estimate. It is interesting to find that all three bands of learners showed a consistent high interest in 'Feel-good' purposes.

### 5.1.3. Gender

There is not much to mention from the analysis by gender. However, I did find that females tend to fall into 'Feel-good' category. In addition, it can be said that gender is not much related to purpose of learning.

Gender	Samples	'Matric-mad'	'Skills-mad'	'Feel-good'
Male	21	3.9	3.9	3.9
Female	29	3.7	3.8	4.2

Table 16: Purpose comparison per gender

### 5.1.4. Age

By analysing data per age, learners in their thirties choose 'Matric-mad' as the strongest purpose of learning while other age groups, except for one sixty-year old learner, chose it as the least important purpose. In addition, the gap between the three categories amongst learners in their thirties, is the smallest. I assume this is because of their self-image of having a deficit in education, skill and positive self-image. From informal interviews in Phase I, I received an impression that learners in their thirties are more highly motivated than other age groups.

Age	Samples	'Matric-mad'	'Skills-mad'	'Feel-good'
- 29 years old	13	3.4	4.1	4.1
30 - years old	37	3.9	3.8	4.0
30 - 39 years old	17	4.5	4.0	4.2
40 - 49 years old	14	3.3	3.7	3.9
50 - 59 years old	5	3.9	3.9	4.1
60 - 69 years old	1	2.5	1.5	3.7

Table 17: Purpose comparison per age

### 5.1.5. Comparison of purposes of learning between learners' and providers' estimations

As the final analysis in this section, I tried to find commonality among all sites in terms of congruence and disparity between learners' views and providers' estimations. I



removed three categorisations of purposes of learning and then compared answers from both learners' and providers' sides. There is one trend found across all sites; that is, providers tend to underestimate the importance of 'to be self-employed'. The following table indicates estimated points in 'to be self-employed' as a purpose of learning per site (see Appendix A and B).

Band	Site	Learner	Provider
ABET	Site A	4.0	2.0
	Site B	4.3	3.0
	Site C	4.2	N/A
	Site D	4.0	1.0
	Site E	2.0	3.0
FET	Site F	4.6	5.0
	Site G	4.0	3.0
	Site H	3.0	3.0
	Site I	4.0	4.0
Vocational training	Site J	4.4	3.0

*Table 18: Comparison between learners and providers on 'to be self-employed'*

What is striking is that ABET providers, especially, do not rate highly their purpose of "to be self-employed". Regardless of occupational status, gender, educational level and band, learners show strong intentions to be self-employed. One exceptional factor is age. In the interview, relatively younger learners (the ones that are basically not my focus group in this study) expressed their intention in being employed at first to have experience, then to be self-employed later. This implies that learners have realised the difficulty of being employed considering the current low economic growth and the high unemployment rate.

#### 5.1.6. Conclusion

There are several significant findings from this data analysis. Firstly, unemployed learners chose the 'Skills-mad' purposes rather than others. It implies that unemployed learners link skills training with access to jobs.

Secondly, the purpose of the ABET learners tend to range over three categories. However the FET and vocational training learners showed more interest in 'Skills-mad' purposes than the other two. This implies a difference in learners' purposes, at the

same time reflects the historical mission of providers; night schools for literacy and technical colleges for vocational training.

However, thirdly, what is important to find was not only the disparity between ABET and FET providers but also a disparity between learners and providers. For example, among ABET learners, the interest in the 'Skills-mad' purpose is significantly stronger than providers' estimation. This implies a gap between learners' interest and providers' understanding as well as reflecting the historical mission of the different institutions.

Finally, regarding the disparity between learners and providers, there is a consistent claim for 'Feel-good' purposes among adult learners regardless of their characteristics. Furthermore I realised that the 'Feel-good' elements have been excluded from the idea of integration of education and training although it appears consistently among adult learners. This finding broadened my perspective on integration.

## 5.2. Congruence between adult learners' interests and practices

From the brief understanding of adult learners' purposes of learning examined in the previous section, I understand that ABET learners tend to choose the 'Matric-mad' purpose, and FET and vocational training learners tend to choose 'Skills-mad' purposes. Yet regardless what band they are in, learners tend to seek the 'Feel-good' purpose in their learning activities despite the low estimation of this among providers. Furthermore, unemployed learners are keen on skills training for the purpose of work. Based on these understandings, I will analyse how their purposes relate to actual learning activities in this section. Furthermore, how integration has occurred in their process of learning. Firstly, I attempted to make a comparison between subjects that learners registered for in 2000 and subjects that they are interested in. Then I categorise those subjects into Fundamental, Core and Elective based on criteria explained in the methodology chapter according to the rules of combination that the NQF promotes. By doing so, I try to examine the way in which the rules of combination are being applied in practice as an indicator of integration of education and training.

The following chart shows an overview of subjects that learners (for number of sample, see (1)) are currently registered for (see upper row in (2) R) in the year 2000, and subjects that they claim to be interested in (see lower row in (2) I). The percentages

under each category indicate the ratio of the combination of subjects as compared with the NQF ratios.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	Fundamental (30%)		Core (45%)		Elective (25%)	
Total	50	R	88	51%	45	18%	16	31%	27
		I	100	19%	19	25%	25	56%	56

*Table 19: Ratios of three learning categories per registered and interested subjects of learners*

One significant finding from this comparison is that the higher figure for registered subjects tends to be under the Fundamental category whereas the higher figure for interested subjects tends to be under the Elective category. Another important finding is that the ratios of these three categories of both registered subjects (Fundamental 51%, Core 18%, Elective 31%) and interested subjects (Fundamental 19%, Core 25%, Elective 56%) are completely different from the GETC proposal (Fundamental 30%, Core 45%, Elective 25%).

Next, I analysed data according to characteristics of learners such as educational level, occupational status ((self-) employed or unemployed), level of registration (ABET, FET, vocational training), gender and age as indicated below and I found similar phenomena in most cases, as follows.

### 5.2.1. Educational level

In the case of educational levels, learners who have lower educational levels tend to be more interested in Elective subjects than learners who have higher educational levels. Furthermore, the lower the educational level, the more ratio disparity between registered subjects and interested subjects. Ratios for interested subjects among the three groups are not different and what makes 0 years group stand out is the high concentration of registered subjects in the Fundamental. This is because of their learning pace and lower achievement compared to learners who have higher educational levels.

Factor	(1)	(2)	(3)	Fundamental (30%)		Core (45%)		Elective (25%)	
Education level									
0 years	8	R	15	100%	15	0%	0	0%	
		I	16	13%	2	25%	4	63%	10
1 ~ 2 years	0	R	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		I	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3 ~ 7 years	6	R	7	71%	5	0%	0	29%	2
		I	12	25%	3	17%	2	58%	7
8 ~ 12 years	36	R	65	38%	25	25%	16	37%	24
		I	72	19%	14	26%	19	54%	39

Table 20: Ratios of three learning categories per educational level

### 5.2.2. Occupational status

From an occupational status view, both employed and unemployed, but especially unemployed, learners show a stronger tendency towards wanting to do Elective subjects. I understand this is because of learners' expectations to gain employment by obtaining skills. The ratio of registered subjects of the unemployed shows the opposite tendency from other groups, however, this is because of the fact that there are none at

all or very few Fundamental and Core subjects available at the providers at which they are registered (Site H, I and J). However, it can be said that providers where unemployed learners learn, meet learners' needs better than other providers.

Regarding employed learners, however, it is interesting that the figures for the interested subjects in the Elective category did not show much difference between the unemployed. It implies that adult learners tend to be interested in Elective subjects regardless of occupational status. I attempted further analysis in relation to whether their employment security is stable or not. I extracted 'stable employed learners' who are employed in an institution (Site C and J) and attend the ABET programmes that the institution provides for their employees and I examined their interested subjects compared to the ratio between other 'unstable employed learners'. The sample number of the former is ten, and the latter is 26. The ratio of the former is Fundamental 15%, Core 40% and Elective 45%, while the latter is 19%, 23% and 58% respectively. It seems that the more employment is secure, the more learners are interested in non-Elective subjects. I believe that this is a highly significant finding.

Factor	(1)	(2)	(3)	Fundamental (30%)		Core (45%)		Elective (25%)	
Occupational status									
Employed	36	R	73	62%	45	18%	13	21%	15
		I	72	18%	13	28%	20	54%	39
Unemployed	13	R	14	0%	0	14%	2	86%	12
		I	26	23%	6	15%	4	62%	16
N/A	1								

Table 21: Ratios of three learning categories per occupational status

### 5.2.3. Band

According to the band in which they are currently enrolled, most of the registered subjects on which the ABET learners are working are Fundamental, although approximately only 20 percent of interested subjects are chosen in the Fundamental category. On the contrary, the FET learners' registered subjects seem to be consistent with the interested subjects. I assume that this is because there is more agreement between learners' interests and subjects availability in the FET band compared to the ABET band. In terms of the agreement, the vocational training provider seems to present an even more explicit response towards learners' interests. As I showed in the

introduction of each site, ABET providers, especially small size institutions, tend to provide Fundamental subjects rather than Core and Elective subjects. It implies that ABET provision is basic academic subjects-oriented (mainly literacy) whereas FET provision is technical, vocational skill subjects-oriented. Further, neither form of provision has met the rules of combination that the NQF envisages.

Factor	(1)	(2)	(3)	Fundamental (30%)		Core (45%)		Elective (25%)	
Level									
ABET	25	R	48	83%	40	8%	4	8%	4
		I	50	18%	9	32%	16	50%	25
FET	20	R	35	14%	5	34%	12	51%	18
		I	40	23%	9	18%	7	60%	24
Vocational training	5	R	5	0%	0	0%	0	100%	5
		I	10	10%	1	20%	2	70%	7

Table 22: Ratios of three learning categories per educational band

#### 5.2.4. Gender

Regarding gender, both gender groups shows much interest in Elective but the registered subjects tend to be under Fundamental. It might be interesting to find that female are interested in Elective more than male and male are more interested in Core than female.

Factor	(1)	(2)	(3)	Fundamental (30%)		Core (45%)		Elective (25%)	
Gender									
Male	21	R	35	54%	19	17%	6	29%	10
		I	42	29%	12	31%	13	40%	17
Female	29	R	51	51%	26	18%	9	31%	16
		I	58	12%	7	21%	12	67%	39

Table 23: Ratios of three learning categories per gender

#### 5.2.5. Age

Age is another interesting factor with which to analyse the data. The adult learners on which I focus in this study show the same phenomenon as the general data, whereas younger learners (younger than thirty years old) show more of an agreement between

the registered and interested subjects. I understand this is because most of them are in the FET band (Site H and I) where seemingly more Elective subjects are available than in the ABET band.

Factor	(1)	(2)	(3)	Fundamental (30%)		Core (45%)		Elective (25%)	
Age									
- 29 years old	13	R	18	17%	3	11%	2	72%	13
		I	26	23%	6	19%	5	58%	15
30 - years old	37	R	70	60%	42	20%	14	20%	14
		I	74	18%	13	27%	20	55%	41
30 - 39 years old	17	R	38	55%	21	24%	9	21%	8
		I	34	18%	6	32%	11	50%	17
40 - 49 years old	14	R	22	55%	12	18%	4	27%	6
		I	28	25%	7	18%	5	57%	16
50 - 59 years old	5	R	9	89%	8	11%	1	0%	0
		I	10	0%	0	40%	4	60%	6
60 - years old	1	R	1	100%	1	0%	0	0%	0
		I	2	0%	0	0%	0	100%	2

Table 24: Ratios of three learning categories per age

#### 5.2.6. Conclusion

There are two significant findings from this analysis. Firstly, registered subjects tend to fall under the Fundamental while interested subjects tend to be under the Elective. The interest in the Elective subjects always shows the highest, no matter from which angle (factor) the data is analysed. That is far from what the NQF promotes in terms of rules of combination.

Secondly, the more learners are disadvantaged, in other words, learners who have lower educational levels, who are unemployed, female and older and who are in lower levels of learning, the more the tendency towards interested subjects being in the Elective category. It implies that the more learners are disadvantaged, the more they are eager to obtain training that, seemingly they expect, leads them into the world of work. I understand that there are diverse and complicated expectations towards 'education' among learners, however, these data show much interest and many expectations for training related to job security among adult learners. In addition, there seems to be a certain prior order that learners need to satisfy and expect education to respond to; firstly, job security, secondly, educational certificate and qualification, then,

the most interestingly, 'Feel-good' regardless of situation or level. This is what educational policy makers have to take into account, I realised.

For further analysis, I acknowledged that there are two types of disparities. One is the disparity between ABET providers and FET providers in terms of response to learners' needs. The other is the disparity between learners' needs and providers' estimation towards of these needs.

Firstly, it seems vocational training providers are most able to meet learners interests, then FET providers (band), and then the ABET providers at the least. By comparing the ABET and FET providers, the response to learners' interests seems to depend on the historical background. Technical colleges, in general, have provided technical, in short, Elective subjects. While ABET providers historically, as informal educational providers, have focused narrowly on literacy education which is equivalent to the Fundamental subjects. I realised that it is more difficult for the ABET providers to respond to the current diverse learners' needs. Furthermore, unlike technical colleges, many small size ABET providers are located in remote areas and do not have resources or a range of subjects available. The ABET learners registered with these providers usually do not have much mobility to access larger and well-equipped providers in town, so they rely on those ABET providers. Although ABET learners are interested in skills training, there is not much skills training available.

I understand that this relates to what McGrath (1997) argues, the historical differences between education and training, and institutional provision. The reconstruction of institutions, both physically and psychologically and the widening of learners' access in terms of mobility, should be taking place so that these learners can access providers where their interested subjects are available. The idea of the NQF is that learners do not necessarily obtain all credits required from one provider but can accumulate credits from multiple providers. However those learners who have immense difficulty to access other providers because of various obstacles such as transportation, finance and time seem to have little opportunity to satisfy their interests.



Secondly, there is a disparity between learners and providers found in the data; that is, the disparity in learners' and providers' answers in 'to be self-employed'. Some educators' comments on adult learners were "it is too early for them to co-operate with skills training at ABET level 1 or 2" and "it is too late for adult learners to co-operate with theoretical studies." The former possibly implies that despite the fact that learners in the ABET band aim to be self-employed by learning at their site, providers seem not to take it into account as a feasible purpose. ABET learners scaled this purpose as strongly as FET and vocational training learners. It seems that learners want to be self-employed no matter what level they are at. The latter comment seemingly blocks adult learners in different ways. Learners in the FET band show strong interest in self-employment and providers seem to realise this according to their answers. However, the comment and actual dropout rate in traditional technical studies (overall, approximately fifty percent) in the FET band indicates there are limited opportunities for adult learners to fit into the formal system. If ABET level 1 and 2 is too early to start skills training, and if the FET band is too late to study theory, where can an integrated education and training system be available for adult learners?

Having repeatedly mentioned the consistent interest in the 'Feel-good' purpose across all learners, I understood that there is a tendency of a lack of acknowledgement of the Core subjects in the current educational provision. This may not be directly related to my study, but since this tendency appears, regardless of learners' characteristics, I realised this means something important. I understand that COSATU emphasised the importance of a wide range of Core subjects in the early 1990s. However what is happening on the ground is different from what COSATU envisaged at that stage. From the further analysis of 'stable employed learners', what COSATU argued was feasible if learners' employment is secure. I personally have no doubt about the importance of Core subjects as a part of education, however what I have found from adult learners' interests implies a disparity between theory and practice and a difficulty in bringing it into adult education in the current system.

Therefore, at the end of this section, I attempted to find a linkage between three learning categories, Fundamental, Core and Elective and the three learning purposes, 'Matric-mad', 'Skills-mad' and 'Feel-good'. The following tables are summaries of learners' interested learning categories (*Table 15*) and purpose (*Table 22*).

Band	'Matric-mad'	'Feel-good'	'Skills-mad'
ABET	4.1	4.2	3.5
FET	3.8	3.9	4.2
Vocational training	2.5	4.1	4.4

Table 25: Purpose comparison per educational band – learners and providers (abstraction of Table 15)

Factor	Fundamental (30%)	Core (45%)	Elective (25%)
ABET	18%	32%	50%
FET	23%	18%	60%
Vocational training	10%	20%	70%

Table 26: Ratios of three learning categories per educational band (abstraction of Table 22)

I realised there is a correlation between two categories. ABET and FET learners show more of an interest in the Fundamental subjects than vocational training learners. There is also more of a tendency to choose 'Matric-mad' purposes for learning among ABET and FET learners. On the other hand, Elective subjects attract vocational training learners more than others. 'Skills-madness' is also strongest in vocational training learners, second strongest in FET and least in ABET. Finding a correlation between Core and 'Feel-good' was difficult due to ambiguity of 'Feel-good' factors. However from early analysis, regardless of the characteristics of learners there is a consistent, stable and relatively high tendency to choose this as a purpose for learning. If these linkages are acceptable, I estimate Fundamental and 'Matric-mad' as education in the narrow sense, Core and 'Feel-good' as the secondary utilisation of education enriching learners' life but still part of education, then Elective and 'Skills-mad' as training that is directly related to the world of work. To promote the integration that includes not only Fundamental and Elective subjects, but also Core subjects, the availability of subjects needs to be developed in a broader sense.

In the next section, I introduce how providers analyse their mission towards adult learners. There are several positive movements among providers and negative effects are predicted at the same time. Furthermore I examine changes that they think they should make to improve their institutions. At the same time, I try to draw elements from some of their ideas in relation to my research question on the integration of education and training.

### 5.3. Providers' understanding of missions and changes in provision

Since the new educational system has been introduced and is continuously being modified, responses from providers are also continuously changing. I have seen that these providers have been in utter confusion at times. Every time I visited them, I found that something new had happened at the sites. Also, I often found that providers have been struggling to adapt their institutions in order to respond, not only to disadvantaged, over-aged adult learners but also to other learners. Furthermore, they are struggling, not only to provide education to learners, but also to comply with the legal framework that requires them to put in an immense amount of work.

In this section, firstly, I introduce how providers understand their mission in adult education, secondly, what changes they think they need to make to respond to adult learners' needs.

#### 5.3.1. Providers' mission towards adult education

The following table shows a certain pattern in their understanding of their missions as educational providers.

Mission		Site								
		ABET			ABET & FET		FET			Voc
		A	B	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1.	To listen to learners' needs.	v	v	v					v	v
2.	To counsel them as to their possibilities, weaknesses and strengths. To adjust their goals and possibilities.	v	v	v	v					
3.	To provide academic training for literacy and/or Matriculation.		v			v				
4.	To provide marketable skills training for job opportunities and a linkage between learning and work.	v		v			v	v	v	v
5.	To make their life different and to develop their self-estimation.	v	v	V		v				v

Table 27: Providers' mission towards adult education

From the table, I found there was a tendency for ABET providers to try to address adult learners' needs, and at the same time adjust them to a realistic level (1. and 2.). This implies that often heard comment from them, "adult learners tend to set their goals too

high". I realised, also, that the ABET providers state their mission as being related to the empowerment of learners (5.). I assume that this is because providers assume that learners have not been aware of, not only their possibilities, but also what education can do for them. The mission of ABET providers to introduce this to learners seems significant.

On the other hand the FET providers tend to mention skills training provision as their mission. This is predictable in the sense that as technical colleges they have historically had a mission of providing vocational training.

### 5.3.2. Changes providers think they need to make

In the questionnaire, I asked the providers what changes they need to make in order to integrate education and training. The following table presents their answers.

Change		Site							
		ABET			ABET & FET		FET		
		A	B	D	E	F	G	H	I
1.	To provide more basic education (literacy).		v		v				
2.	To provide practical, marketable and employable skills training.			v		v	v	v	v
3.	To change attitude of stakeholders and to link education and workplace.	v							
4.	To widen access to educational opportunities.			v		v			
5.	To assess the content and certificate of learning.				v				
6.	To develop resources (classroom, support, educators, finance)			v					v

Table 28: Changes providers need to make

Firstly, I analyse the changes 1. and 2. because both are related to the integration of education and training at the level of the learning subjects. Emphasis on literacy or basic education was made by two ABET providers. The learners at these two ABET providers are registered for the ABET 1 to 3 levels. It implies that those learners are struggling at the entrance of academic education and are not yet ready to proceed to skills training, according to the provider's comment from Site B; "literacy is a basic requirement to prepare for education and skills" and "it is too early for ABET 1 and 2 learners to cope with skills training". Naturally neither of them raised skills training as a

change they think they need to make. There appears to be an idea that skills training and literacy education cannot happen at the same time. There is another ABET provider who did not mention skills training provision, that is Site A whose learners are fully employed. The practitioner often mentioned that his comments would be different from other providers' because their learners characteristics are different in terms of occupational status and if he answered the questionnaire in the way of adult educators in general, the answer would be different. It is interesting that 'the manager of Site J mentioned not only vocational training, but also general education (1.). However he claimed that it is very difficult to provide education because their training is full time. I understand that this requires more resources, in terms of educators, classroom, syllabus and budget.

Regarding skills training, most providers showed their understanding of the needs for providing skills training (2.). There were interesting comments and different perspectives on skills training emerging from each provider. The co-ordinator of Site D said, "to give learners practical skills, encourage those who struggle with the 'academic' work. Help them become more employable or entrepreneurial". It is interesting that the co-ordinator acknowledges skills training not only for work-oriented reasons but also for encouraging learners. The principal of Site F mentioned, "students and community need to learn survival skills and be self-employed" and "we have to combine education and practical skills, for example accounting and entrepreneurship skills". The Principal of Site G (technical college) claimed that "more hands on training provision is necessary to develop skills but not theory. Perhaps the change should be to move away from theory." This was a surprising finding because it appeared to be against the notion of integration. However, in this site, more skills training courses, for example Welding and Electronics, will be available from 2001 for those adult learners that have no entry requirements, and these are independent courses. He explained that the purpose of providing these courses as "to teach basic skills in the technical field, then to add theory for those who are interested". Also, "students can go into learnerships if they want to or get a job or become an artisan". Regarding the comment an educator made at Site H, "it is too late for adult learners to cope with theory", I perceived that there is a certain trend among FET providers (currently technical colleges) that they are passive towards adult education, especially in relation to the integration of education and training, namely theoretical studies and skills

training. The campus director of Site H (technical college) mentioned the importance of training equipment that should be the same as that which factories use in the workplace. It reminds me of the FET official's view of FET colleges' mission; to respond to industries' needs.

Besides the emphasis on more skills training provision that is made among providers, the campus director of Site I argues that "It's no good just growing the skill". The director added, "learners must be able to market themselves". I understand her comment as it enhances the point that the principal of Site F made and shows the necessity for a combination of skills training and life-skills training that probably consists of literacy, entrepreneurship and more general knowledge of life. Furthermore, I noted that this is related to the rules of combination because academic education/skills training should not be "stand alone" without skills training/academic education to meet the rule, and furthermore to meet the learners' needs that I examined in the previous sections.

Secondly, I interrogate change 3.. The point the practitioner of Site A made is crucial because it relates to low expectations and stigmatisation of adult education. He argued that at present education is viewed as a disturbance and disruption to the normal flow of work. He explained that:

employees are often unable to engage in meaningful training due to the lack of education. The ad hoc progression needs to be structured so that employees learn in order to reach **specific** goals.

This is similar to the unclear relationship between learning and job promotion in Site C. The empowerment of learners is often raised as a reason for providing education to employees, but it seems to bring sense into adult education from the education-**givers'** side but not from education-**receivers'** side, unless learners realise the linkage of education and the meaning of education in practice through the achievement of specific goals as he suggested. Otherwise learners feel intimidated by employers as this practitioner described.

Regarding change 4., two providers mentioned "to widen access to educational opportunities" as one of the changes they need to make (4.). I cannot know whether they were aware of this missing linkage or not, from their answers, but one thing I am

sure is that both of them understand that adult learners tend to set their goals too high and they need to counsel learners to adjust their goals and possibilities. I realised that the linkage is necessary not only at the workplace, but it is generally significant to set up appropriate goals among adult learners.

Thirdly, providers raised changes related to their managerial matters (5., 6.). The educational providers' task is not only to provide education to learners but also to manage their institutions while complying with legal frameworks. Assessment of the content and certificates that is mentioned by the principal of Site E implies an uncertainty about learning levels and real content. During my visits to sites, I often noted that learners' levels in one site are vastly different from those at another site. As the NQF admits that learners accumulate credit from various providers, the quality assurance of learning must be a very significant issue.

Although only three providers raised resources as a change they need to make, almost all of the providers have mentioned it in the preliminary survey. Resources in the form of educators, and the need for finance were often mentioned. Some providers argued that though the NQF promotes integration of education and training, there are few educators available who can teach in an integrated way. Regarding financial management, all providers claimed that there is definitely a shortage of budget. However, I gained the impression that providers felt they somehow needed to manage to survive in the austerity as long as adequate budgets cannot be allocated by the state.

### 5.3.3. Challenges for educational providers

In this section, I introduce changes that (will) have been taking place at each site. Firstly, I present the list of subjects and courses that providers think they need to provide to integrate education and training. Secondly, I introduce other changes that have been occurring at sites since my visits. These changes show dynamic activities and drastic changes among providers and in ABET and FET even beyond the band, and even involving policy changes.

### 5.3.3.1. Changes being taking place at sites

The following table (*Table 29*) shows subjects and courses that providers think they should provide and the reasons for this. In addition, based on their answers, I made a comparison or ratio of the three learning categories (Fundamental, Core and Elective) between currently available subjects and future subjects and courses they envisage in *Table 30*.

Band	Site	Subjects/courses	(1)	Reason
ABET	A	Basic computer skills	E	Most of our internal functions are being computerised. Staff feeling threatened by possible "take over" - (being made redundant).
		Bridging courses into technical and vocational training	C	This will improve the relevance of present education received by employees through current ABET courses.
	B	Skills training	E	To facilitate self-employment.
	D	Life orientation (A2, 3, 4)	C	General life skills, awareness of self and surroundings would be part of course. To draw in range of social issues, relevant to learners.
		Human and social sciences (A3,4)	C	To help with general knowledge, understanding of our society community develops, etc.
		Technology (A3)	E	Because these are practical skills and knowledge.
		Child-care, computers, driving, cookery, sewing	E	These skills to be developed - hopefully to bring in more employment opportunities, enrichment of self.
ABET & FET	E	Commercial literacy	F	It is a world phenomenon, and tool of writing in workplace.
		Entrepreneurship	C	To promote self-employment because workplaces in SA especially. Western Cape cannot accommodate those learners in terms of number of opportunities availability.
		Life skills	C	For black community. Because they seem to come to the college where Coloureds/Whites dominate
	F	Building/construction related e.g. Bricklaying, Plumbing, Electrical wiring, Carpentry	E	The students are asking for vocational skills, and those skills are necessary in Langa because people need to build up new houses in the community.
		Business skills	E	Because these are practical and possibly of help to students to get a job.
		Public Administration	E	
		Computer studies	E	Because it is a basic education for modern world.



Band	Site	Subjects/courses	(1)	Reason
FET	G	Engineering studies (Mathematics, Science, Communication, Drawings, Technology, Trade theory)	C	To teach basic skills in technical field. Adding theory for those interested. Students can go into learnerships if they want to or get a job or become an artisan.
		Basic hands on skills training (e.g. Welding, electrical, Electronics, Mechanical studies)	E	(Same as above.) Learners can take only these training courses.
		Child-care	E	Because it's a social issue. To contribute to community.
	H	Food services (N1, 2)	E	Because it is a growing industry, related to tourism, and many job opportunities
	I	Literacy	F	Especially in Masiphumelele. There is a need for this.
		English	F	Our trainees need to improve their communication skills in English because the job market is mostly English.
		Driving Lessons	E	We need a vehicle and we need to offer this as private lessons are unaffordable for many and it would have an impact on the accident on our roads.
		Life-Skills	C	For the youth both old and young, there is a real lack of appropriate life-skills brought about by lack of experience.
		Community House-buildings	C	A natural leadership which will provide multi-skilled community house-builders.
		Building a spirit of community	C	We need to bring members from diverse backgrounds and experience together in order to build a spirit of community.
		Community health promotion	C	The community is more and more going to need care-givers. And we need to provide and increase the knowledge base regarding health matters.
Vocational training	J	Building related courses (Plumbing, Electricity, Brick-making, etc)	E	Trained labour force are needed to build houses in disadvantaged communities to replace informal houses.
		Electronics	E	Job opportunities for entrepreneurs to do repairs. (e.g. TVs, radios, and other electric appliances.)
		Heavy duty driving license	E	Few Black people have this skill and there is a demand for A.A., For employment opportunities.
		Catering, Hospitality	E	Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the Western Cape and people need skills to make use of this opportunity.

(1) F = Fundamental, C = Core, E = Elective

Table 29: Subjects/courses providers should provide

Site		Fundamental	Core	Elective
Site A	Number of subjects:	4 -> 4	1 -> 2	0 -> 1
	Ratio of subjects:	80.0% -> 57.0%	20.0% -> 29.0%	0.0% -> 14.0%
Site B	Number of subjects:	1 -> 1	0 -> 0	0 -> 1
	Ratio of subjects:	100.0% -> 50.0%	0.0% -> 0.0%	0.0% -> 50.0%
Site C	Number of subjects:	1	1	0
	Ratio of subjects:	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Site D	Number of subjects:	4 -> 4	1 -> 3	1 -> 3
	Ratio of subjects:	66.0% -> 40.0%	17.0% -> 30.0%	17.0% -> 30.0%
Site E	Number of subjects:	3 -> 4	0 -> 2	0 -> 0
	Ratio of subjects:	100.0% -> 67.0%	0.0% -> 33.0%	0.0% -> 0.0%
Site F	Number of subjects:	4 -> 4	16 -> 16	11 -> 15
	Ratio of subjects:	13.0% -> 11.0%	52.0%	35.0%
Site G	Number of subjects:	2 -> 2	2 -> 3	2 -> 4
	Ratio of subjects:	33.3% -> 22.2%	33.3% -> 33.3%	33.3% -> 44.4%
Site H	Number of subjects:	0 -> 0	0 -> 0	1 -> 2
	Ratio of subjects:	0.0% -> 0.0%	0.0% -> 0.0%	100.0% -> 100.0%
Site I	Number of subjects:	2 -> 4	0 -> 4	7 -> 8
	Ratio of subjects:	22.0% -> 25.0%	0.0% -> 25.0%	78.0% -> 50.0%
Site J	Number of subjects:	0 -> 0	1 -> 1	9 -> 13
	Ratio of subjects:	0.0% -> 0.0%	17.0% -> 7.0%	83.0% -> 93.0%
Total	Number of subjects:	21 -> 24	22 -> 32	23 -> 47
	Ratio of subjects:	31.8% -> 23.3%	33.3% -> 31.1%	34.8% -> 45.6%

Table 30: Ratios of three learning categories in future

Overall, it is obvious that most providers take skills training (Elective) into consideration regardless of band. If these subjects were provided, the total ratio of Fundamental, Core and Elective subjects would be 23%:31%:46% and it is 32%:33%:35% currently. More concentration on the Elective (increase 11%) and less concentration in Fundamental (decrease 9%) will happen. This distorts from the GETC proposed (Fundamental:Core:Elective = 30%:45%:25%) even further.

From interviews with providers, I confirmed that many of these subjects would be provided sooner or later because these decisions are based on actual surveys they have done. There are providers' efforts and evidence to support these decisions about provision of new subjects and courses. In the case of Site F, the provider has surveyed learners' needs annually and acknowledged that the majority of learners wanted skills training courses, especially related to building and construction. Further, "the connection between education, training and employment has been clearly identified by the majority of the students." These subjects will be building and construction-related subjects available from 2001.

In the case of Site G, according to the principal, there has been a large scale

community survey. I have not seen the result of the survey because the survey finished only after my visits, but he seemed to count on the survey to understand the learners' needs and the communities' needs as well. In this site, some vocational training will be available from 2001, such as Welding and Electrics.

Another trend I found from their answers is the tendency towards combining life-skills and skills training subjects. Life-skills according to this perspective often show a similarity with entrepreneurship. Besides the persistent claim for basic education (Fundamental) such as literacy, there is a trend towards entrepreneurship, plus skills training, so that learners can engage in a job. This implies the aspiration to be self-employed. Further, there are no Core subjects in providers' answers and this shows an absence of the acknowledgement of the importance of the wide range of Core subjects that COSATU argued for in the early 1990s (see 5.2.6.).

Finally, there is one more significant trend, especially from providers that attempt to link closely with the surrounding community; that is the tendency to play a key role in the development of their community. In other words, educational providers try to be an axis for linking and unifying community needs by providing education in a broader sense; not only a narrow sense of education to provide academic subjects, but also a broader sense of education to reinforce the "spirit" of the community.

#### 5.3.3.2. Dynamic and drastic changes among providers

During and after my visits, there are some dynamic changes happening across adult education participants. Firstly, there is a significant movement of technical colleges towards ABET provision. In late 2000, the ABET Bill was passed in Parliament and will become an act soon. However the CTCP (Committee of Technical College Principals) lodged an objection against the bill. The reason was they were not satisfied with the competency of ex-ABET level 4 learners. Their proposal was to provide ABET 4 in their own institutions. In fact, one of the technical colleges starts providing ABET soon. As I noted during visits to sites, there is no doubt that there is a huge disparity between learning content and the achievement of ABET learners and those from compulsory schooling. I had been anxious about the learning content and learners' competency at

ABET level 4 from my own class observations. This problem may be related to the gap between ABET levels 1 to 3, and then to 4, which is equivalent to GETC. The situation may change as the IEB and provincial education departments establish examinations at ABET level 4.

Due to uncertainty about ABET level 4, technical colleges have planned to provide ABET 4 as a bridging course at their institutions to narrow down the gap and make learners ready to cope with further education. As I mentioned from the interview data with officials, this is approved as a new form of partnership between ABET and FET. However, I feel anxious that this change may exclude adult learners who struggle between ABET level 3 and 4 from entry to further education. In fact, many adult learners stop learning after ABET level 3 and drop out from ABET level 4. Although learners finish ABET level 3 and go into level 4 at technical colleges, as long as there is a huge gap between levels 3 and 4 in terms of learning content, it seems that they have to spend an enormous time to become competent, and to become the desirable ABET level 4 learner that technical colleges envisage can obtain their GETCs.

Secondly, regarding the partnerships between ABET and FET, that is now starting to happen in practice. As I mentioned before, there has been a confusion of state budget allocation and utilisation crossing in ABET and FET institutions. However, recently, the state has started to address the problem. This leads to new partnership development between ABET and FET institutions so that they can share resources.

Both changes seem to smooth learners' transit from ABET to FET in the sense of institutional pathways. However, due to the uncertainty of learning content and competency of ABET 4 that should be equivalent to GETC, and the gap between ABET and FET curriculum transformation that technical colleges problematised, there seem still to be crucial problems that need to be solved.

## Chapter 6 Conclusion

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Throughout this study, I have been overwhelmed by the diversity of the circumstances in adult education in South Africa despite the limitation of this study to the Western Cape, and how immensely difficult it is to delineate the portrait of adult learners. The more I realised the diversity of adult learners, the more I questioned the feasibility of the integrated approach through the unified educational framework, the NQF, in adult education. To conclude this study, I firstly attempt to answer the research question by summarising these findings and stating the causality between my answer and findings. Secondly, I discuss further findings that were not directly related to the research question but I feel, are too important to ignore.

### 6.1. Answer to the research question

For the purpose of the economic development and redress of past unfairness, the South African education system has been restructured and the NQF has been established. The integration of education and training has been emphasised as a key concept of the NQF. I interrogated the research question, "What is the feasibility of the integration of education and training through promotion of the GETC as envisaged within the NQF discourse?" through conducting qualitative and quantitative research methods in Phase I and Phase II. What I have found was the integration that the NQF envisages is not yet happening, furthermore it has various latent problems due to ambiguities in the policy.

#### *Disparity between the GETC proposal and learners' registered learning areas*

Instead, I found serious imbalances in the integration of education and training on the ground. Firstly, the ratio of learning areas based on rules of combination is not at all practised, and the lack of congruence in what learners are learning and the differing definitions of subjects across institutions leads to a sense of chaos if seen through the lens of the rules of combination. Although learners have strong interests in Elective subjects (skills training) related to job security, the actual subjects they registered for

and that are available at sites are concentrated in the Fundamental area such as Communication and Numeracy. Secondly, in terms of providers, traditional and differing perceptions of their mission in education between ABET and FET remain. ABET tends to academic subject-oriented, whereas FET tends to be skills training-centred. Furthermore, in some cases, I found a barrier embedded in providers' perspectives on adult learners preventing learners from engaging in an integrated approach by insisting firstly, on the idea of learners' readiness to cope with skills training and theoretical studies, and secondly on the traditional (but perhaps realistic) idea of promoting hands-on skills for adult learners. It is unfair and ineffective to lock them into the old historical 'adult education = literacy education' framework.

Even at government level, the type of needs to which each band responds are different. ABET is for community needs, whereas FET is for business and industry needs, according to the government officials.

#### *Disparity between institutional and official levels*

During this study, I was often told that my research is too early because none of the policies is finalised. The NQF has been under discussion and modification. The ABET Bill was passed by parliament in late 2000, and technical colleges are in the process of amalgamation towards being six mega public FET colleges. National examination papers and unit standards for ABET have not been finalised, and the content of unit standards for ABET is not equivalent to Grade 1 to 9 (GET) although it is supposed to be so. FET has not had unit standards yet. There is a protest against the ABET Bill from CTCP (Committee of Technical College Principals) due to questions about ex-ABET level 4 learners' competence. Instead, future FET colleges proposed offering ABET 4, and the WCED ABET section seems to approve of this. I was often perplexed about whether we are in the implementation stage of the policy cycle (de Clerq, 1997) or whether we have not yet reached this stage.

However, since the key concept of the NQF, the integration of education and training has been stable throughout this period, the disparities between institutions, especially at government level should be solved. Providers often mentioned adult learners' slow learning progression, however as long as the educational system is to be integrated, there is supposed to be a certain form of integrated approach at any level of learning, strictly-speaking, based on the NQF. My understanding of learning progression is that it should not be **either** vertical or horizontal progression, but **both** vertical and horizontal

progression. Ideally and strictly speaking according to the NQF, integrated horizontal progression can smoothly lead integrated vertical progression. Because the horizontal learning progression is not happening due to various reasons, the articulation between ABET and FET, that I set out to explore in Phase I, is not happening. While it is claimed by the WCED official that the FET band is education for the masses to “add on, broaden and keep her/his basic stock of skills relevant and to obtain mobility and portability as human resources” (Interview with FET official), and while the Constitution of South Africa commits itself to the right to basic education and states citizens’ full contribution to the society through education, it seems problematic that adult learners remain at ABET level 1 or 2 for long periods of time.

In addition, there are still the stubborn influences of racial disparities from the old governance among technical colleges. Principals often mentioned their readiness to provide education to unfamiliar racial groups from their old mission. For example, they have to cope with all kinds of learners from all kinds of racial groups, no matter what racial groups of learners they used to accommodate and no matter whether they have not known how to accommodate learners from different racial groups.

#### *Vague goal settings and low/little achievement of goals*

Furthermore, there are on-going issues among adult learners that contradict and trouble the policy because of unfeasible and ambiguous targets specified by the NQF. Regarding rules of combination, there is not a clear definition of contents for the three learning categories (Fundamental, Core and Elective). I have faced an immense difficulty in categorising subjects because of the gap between the title of subjects and the content (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.6.). Computer study, for example, is one of the most popular learning areas now. However, when I observed the computer classes, I could not figure out whether this should fall into Fundamental as a literacy, Core as a part of technology studies or Elective as a skills training because learners were simply opening, typing and saving files. I doubted providers’, (and even the state’s) awareness of the weightiness of the difficulties in complying with rules of combination. Considering this, as at the implementation stage, I realised that the lack of compliance with rules of combination is an interpretation of Ball’s (1993) “policy as text”, but an interpretation of policy in unacceptable ways. This seems to indicate a problematic tendency towards informalisation in the overall context of formalisation, and this can be seen as a serious contradiction in the system. “Policy as discourse” is not yet a firm

enough frame to contain the many interpretations of “policy as text”.

In terms of ‘skill’, for example, to be internationally competitive, South Africa needs to facilitate high participation of the labour force with the accumulation of high levels of skills. However the skills that most adult learners are interested in are relatively low level skills. Furthermore, what they want to do with these skills is to be self-employed, in short, to take part in the informal sector. From the national economic development viewpoint, these adult learners are forever excluded because they have low skills and low participation. To participate in national economic activities, workers must be in the formal sector. However it is not easy for them to participate in the formal sector being employed. Most learners spend a certain portion of the public educational budget to pursue their studies. From rate of return viewpoint, if they do not contribute to the national economy afterwards, the expense of public funding cannot expect to get the interest back. That ultimately puts pressure on the national economy.

Another issue is that of ‘need’. In relation to skill, what need is meant to be focused on, in the NQF? Although policy makers established the NQF by copying from the frameworks of foreign countries, but skills and needs for South Africa cannot be copied from other countries because each context is different, and each nation is “highly path-dependent” (Green, 2000). In case of South Africa, this path has not yet established. However policy makers must address needs. I believe this is highly difficult. Even worse, since the policy has set itself out to accommodate dual goal setting, for example, responding to international market needs or local basic needs, industry or community and economic or learner’s needs.

#### *Exclusion of disadvantaged adult learners*

The South African Constitution (1995) states that everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic so that all citizens irrespective of race, class, gender, creed, or age have the opportunity to develop their capacities and potential, and make their full contribution to the society. However what I found in practice seems to retain adult education as a stigmatised, marginalised and informal perspective in the views of providers. Providers tended to categorise adult learners as if they have a deficit of something in terms of fulfilling basic needs as human beings. From class observations, I often realised that educators spoke to the learners as if they were children. This needs to be redressed. Although policy makers advocate and commit themselves to the right of receiving education as a basic need, adult learners are excluded from the



unified system. It might be because adult learners' voices are not apparent in policy as discourse. We speak what we are within discourse. However, if a certain group of us cannot speak what we are, there might not be a definition of a certain group of us in the discourse. It implies that policy does not yet function as discourse in Ball's sense (1993) in South Africa in terms of the educational framework.

#### *Providers' hesitation and voluntarily exclusion from the NQF*

Adult learners are not the only people that seem excluded from the NQF discourse, providers also appear not to be fully included in the discourse. However the mechanism of exclusion is different. In the case of providers, historical disparities between and the characteristics of institutions are pulling them out from the framework. In other words, there is still a stubbornness in tending to keep to one's past missions under the segregated system. For example, the ABET providers tend to respond to what they see as relevant community needs not based on the discourse of policy but on an earlier discourse of 'community-oriented provision'. FET sees its mission as responding to business and industry needs. Also the principals of technical colleges often mentioned the continuing stubborn influence of racial disparities among them. The historical disparities somehow obstruct or delay their participation in the NQF discourse.

Another example is providers' willingness to comply with the NQF. The Chief Planner for ABET argued that educators need to make effort to implement the Unit Standards and there has been enough time to do so. However, I was told that there were still many providers ignoring the Unit Standards and providers attribute the reasons to the complexity and lack of feasibility of the Unit Standards, as well as lack of resources such as educators and teaching materials. Seemingly they hesitate to participate or even voluntarily exclude themselves from the formalisation implied in the NQF discourse. In this study, I am not able to address what exactly the causes are. However I can say that this is problematic. While a government official, the Chief Planner for ABET, (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.2.) advocates that "adult education does not necessarily belong in the informal sector", why do providers not come into the discourse smoothly? Furthermore, this is a crucial issue that the more time they spend on implementing, for example, the Unit Standards, the more learners go into the world of work without having the adequate knowledge, skills and qualifications that the policy makers envisage for national economic development.

### *What were the faulty assumptions?*

Policy is never finalised and policy itself is a learning process. Then what can we learn from examining the feasibility of the integrated approach that the NQF promotes? As de Clercq (1997:144) argues, the problem of South African educational policy is rooted in the faulty assumptions of policy makers and bureaucracy. I understand that having dual goals within one policy, especially educational policy that is often seen as a panacea for all problems, is an unacceptable strategy. I realised that there are two types of issues surrounding the NQF, one is a 'rooted' issue, and the other is a 'rootless' issue. The former is a practical issue, such as addressing skills in relation to need. This may be defused by putting more labour and effort towards addressing the problem, in other words, doing research to address skills in need, for example, in a certain kind of business. While, the latter is rather an ethical issue. I think the issue of whether to accommodate adult education within a single educational framework is this kind of issue. It requires unlimited debate. Having dual goals within policy, especially where the economic development goal is a practical one, and compensation for the past unfairness is an ethical goal, the NQF is burdened with unfeasible tasks. Even worse, if discrimination is reproduced by the faulty assumptions that contradict the aims of policy, it must be modified. Otherwise policy will self-destruct.

However, my understanding of the most crucial faulty assumption of the NQF in terms of adult education is ignorance of the diversity of adult learners and the inability to address needs. Furthermore, I believe that the diversity of adult learners and needs are not so compact that they can be positioned within the framework. It appears to me that this diversity is much more dynamic than policy makers assume (if they speak about adult learners in their arena). Referring back to de Clercq's notion (1997) of backward and forward mapping in policy I doubt very much the capacity of the state to conduct forward mapping in adult education. Adult learners' characteristics and needs are too fragmentary to neatly address in this approach. The policy for adult education needs to be as flexible and diverse as the learners themselves are. I hope my study contributes to a re-orientation of the approach to address adult learners' need by backward mapping. In the following sections I present for further discussion, contributions from my findings in understanding adult learners' dynamism and possible alternatives to keeping adult education within the framework.

Besides policy makers' faulty assumptions, I also made a faulty assumption in my hypothesis that adult learners are Matric-mad and that educational providers' attempts to respond to this are a reason for why the integration of education and training is not happening. However I realised that although there are expectations and eagerness to obtain matriculation among learners, they use matriculation as a milestone and an abstract goal for their learning, especially among older learners. The statement that "a large proportion of ABET learners in various learning contexts will progress through the levels with the aim of achieving a GETC in order to enter further education or training in the FET band of NQF Levels 2-4" (A qualification and assessment system for ABET, 2000:1.18) sounds unrealistic to me after this study. However, learners are rather more realistic and pragmatic. They want to acquire marketable skills to be self-employed though, "adult education tends to be humanistic, radical, and romantic rather than practical and technical" (NEPI, 1993:6).

## 6.2. For further study

### *The meaning of education and lifelong learning for adult learners.*

What I acknowledged as very important during this study is whether my definition of disadvantaged, over-aged, adult learners might contain the immanent stigma of 'dysfunctional' adult learners. I defined the target group from my perspective as disadvantaged, but in fact most learners have managed their daily lives somehow, although many of them are unemployed or engaging in very casual jobs. It is too optimistic to see them being satisfied simply because they manage their daily lives, but what I want to comment here is that there might be a possibility that policy makers and even myself, misunderstand or tend to attribute social issues such as poverty, crime, unemployment more to education than should be warranted.

From the data analysis, I have found an interesting phenomenon that was the consistent interest in the subjects of the Core category among learners regardless of their characteristics. Despite the consistent and relatively high interest in the Core category, in fact, not many subjects or programmes were available at providers. This reminds me of lifelong learning in Japan where adult learners are willing to invest time and money to satisfy their spirit of inquiry, in areas which are not job-related, for gratification of their thirst for knowledge, but not for survival. The interesting and joyful

part of education might be hidden behind the Core category that seemingly may not bring economic profit to the learners and the nation. If adult education will be only either focused on Fundamental and Elective learning areas, the dynamism of lifelong learning might be challenged. Yet interestingly, I received an impression that most learners who come to learn through their own will, seemed to enjoy learning. This implies that learners come to learn to enjoy, and not to suffer.

However, although I have seen learners enjoying learning, there are some issues. For example, unemployed learners showed less interest in Core categories than employed learners. Among employed learners, learners whose occupational statuses are stable showed more interests in Core categories. So, although adult learners seem to come to classes for joy, unemployment keeps learners away from Core categories. Another issue is learners' slow learning pace. Although they come to enjoy, it is not advisable to repeat the same level for many years without having progression. Most ABET learners at level 1 and 2 struggle to progress to further levels and seem to spend many years at the same level. This seems to be a problematic from an effective learning viewpoint.

Lastly, I realised that adult learners' motivation has a linkage between their learning and the practical usage of the knowledge and skill in daily lives such as in workplaces and at home. It may not sound like a new finding but it is important to remember that most learners are registered for Fundamental subjects, mostly Communication. I am not trying to challenge the meaning of literacy education, but the complexity of the process of recognising the meaning of literacy by learners might sometimes not be strong enough to sustain their motivation. As the practitioner at Site A said, learners need to know why they are learning and when they apply their knowledge and skills.

#### *Disadvantages of adult learners*

Throughout this study, I noted that adult learners do not have access to enough information. For example, the manager of Site D and the educator at Site E claimed that although they advertised their ABET programmes through the media, not enough numbers of adult learners have known about them. Also most ABET providers pointed out that learners set goals too high without knowing what they have to do to achieve the goals. Having considered learners' mobility, i.e. living far from information storage

facilities such as library and Internet, and life-skills that provide methodologies to access information especially in remote areas, this should be taken into account with regard to educational providers' availability. To progress in learning, learners don't necessarily have to go to the same provider because they can accumulate credits from as many providers as long as they are registered at SAQA. However this limited mobility of learners and fewer educational providers' availability in remote areas inhibit their learning progression.

#### *Possibility of community college*

Since the introduction of the formal unified system, community-based civil society organisations that were active in the anti-apartheid period are disappearing. The international funding goes into government instead of these civil society activities. I do not know much of their activities during apartheid, however I assume that Site I might be very close to them. Site I basically belongs to the FET band, however it has the flexibility to address and respond to community needs, and ironically this is what the Chief Planner for ABET envisages. However the process is not simple, the manager needs strong initiative and high management skills to bring scattered elements in the community together, to allocate budgets, to make profits from the projects then distribute and circulate the profit in the community. I believe this is the most feasible adult education provision at present. If there is a well functioning learning centre based on community or even industry, what is the purpose of putting it into the unified formal system? In addition, if there is an established and functioning system, why not use the existing system instead of forcing everybody into the formal framework?

#### 6.3. Conclusion

This study reminds me of a cartoon shown in the ethics textbook in my school days. In this cartoon, there are seven blind men fumbling at a huge elephant. One said, "an elephant is like a snake. It is long and narrow. It is hanging from a tree and swinging all the time". This man is touching the elephant's trunk. Another said, "an elephant is like a bird. It has large wings. It may be flying". This man is touching the elephant's ears.

Adult learners are like this elephant, and policy makers and adult education

researchers are like these seven men. Although I completed this study and tried to contribute to the idea of a backward mapping approach to address adult learners' needs, these are still very mysterious to me. The most important thing that I learnt from this study is that I have to keep watching and touching all over the elephant with widely opened eyes, from her/his trunk to her/his tails. Otherwise I cannot grasp and trace her/him because the elephant moves around looking for fountains, probably founts of lifelong learning.

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## Appendices

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University of Cape Town

Appendix A Questionnaire for learner (English)

University of Cape Town

# Questionnaire

## Learner

### background:

- (not only but esp.) ALs have been battling and struggling due to oppressive sad system/history of SA.
- Now open access due to democracy.
- Expectation for opportunity for education is increasing for 'better life' (esp. employment).
- What educational ?sector? can do for ALs?
- NQF = LLL emerged.
- Lots of debates around NQF.
- Though policy goes one fad to another, educational providers must respond to learners who are there in front of providers and attend classes today.

### Purpose:

- What does it (NQF, LLL) mean especially to ALs?
- What is happening in the ground besides policy shifts.
- What is adult learners' need and how role of education can facilitate them in terms of equity/efficiency (ultimate ideal purpose of this research, but too big to handle for me. It will be wonderful if I can sense something for further study.)

### Gratitude:

- appreciate your coop despite your tight schedule.
- Hope the research can contribute or have some meaning to you.

### Note:

- data is to be used only for the purpose of my research.
- For further inquiry/comment, pls contact me.

Yuko Kikuchi

Educational Administration, Planning and Social Policy  
University of Cape Town

Q1 What subjects/courses have you taken in this year? Please fill in the name of the subject/course and circle the level of this subject/course. (see *Example*)

Q2.1 What other subjects/courses would you want to study if they were available? Choose two subjects/courses from the followings. Put '1' for the most interesting subject/course, and put '2' for the second interesting one in the box.

<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Afrikaans
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Biblical study
<input type="checkbox"/> Biology	<input type="checkbox"/> Brick-making
<input type="checkbox"/> Building/Civil	<input type="checkbox"/> Business economics
<input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry	<input type="checkbox"/> Child-care
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer studies	<input type="checkbox"/> Cosmetology/Haircare
<input type="checkbox"/> Driving	<input type="checkbox"/> Economics
<input type="checkbox"/> Educare	<input type="checkbox"/> Electrics
<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship
<input type="checkbox"/> Fashion Design	<input type="checkbox"/> Geography
<input type="checkbox"/> Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality/Catering services
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Machine-making
<input type="checkbox"/> Maritime trade	<input type="checkbox"/> Motor trade
<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy/Mathematics
<input type="checkbox"/> Painting	<input type="checkbox"/> Physiology
<input type="checkbox"/> Plantation (Gardening)	<input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing
<input type="checkbox"/> Pottery	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Sewing	<input type="checkbox"/> Sport management
<input type="checkbox"/> Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Tool-making
<input type="checkbox"/> Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/> Water treatment
<input type="checkbox"/> Welding	<input type="checkbox"/> Woodwork
<input type="checkbox"/> Xhosa	

Q2.2 Why did you choose those subjects/courses?



Q3 Why did you decide to learn? Please estimate the following reasons. Should you have other reasons, please specify in the blank spaces.

	Least important	<->			Most important
1. To better my life	(	1	2	3	4 5)
2. To get higher certificate/education level	(	1	2	3	4 5)
3. To be self-employed	(	1	2	3	4 5)
4. To gain a positive self-image	(	1	2	3	4 5)
5. To make friends	(	1	2	3	4 5)
6. To change myself as a person	(	1	2	3	4 5)
7. To get promotion	(	1	2	3	4 5)
8. To obtain Matric	(	1	2	3	4 5)
9. To get a job	(	1	2	3	4 5)
10. To read books/newspapers	(	1	2	3	4 5)
11. To help children's/others' homework	(	1	2	3	4 5)
12. _____	(	1	2	3	4 5)
13. _____	(	1	2	3	4 5)

Name	
Age	
Sex	1. Male 2. Female
Educational Level (at school)	Grade 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 or Standard 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Occupation	
If you are unemployed or looking for a job, what kind of job would you want to get?	
Do you have any vocational skill? If so, please specify.	

☐ If you want to remain anonymous, please tick the box.

Appendix B      Questionnaire for provider

University of Cape Town

# Questionnaire

Provider

background:

- (not only but esp.) ALs have been battling and struggling due to oppressive sad system/history of SA.
- Now open access due to democracy.
- Expectation for opportunity for education is increasing for 'better life' (esp. employment).
- What educational ?sector? can do for ALs?
- NQF = LLL emerged.
- Lots of debates around NQF.
- Though policy goes one fad to another, educational providers must respond to learners who are there in front of providers and attend classes today.

Purpose:

- What does it (NQF, LLL) mean especially to ALs?
- What is happening in the ground besides policy shifts.
- What is adult learners' need and how role of education can facilitate them in terms of equity/efficiency (ultimate ideal purpose of this research, but too big to handle for me. It will be wonderful if I can sense something for further study.)

Gratitude:

- appreciate your coop despite your tight schedule.
- Hope the research can contribute or have some meaning to you and your institution.

Note:

- data is to be used only for the purpose of my research.
- For further inquiry/comment, pls contact me.

Yuko Kikuchi

Educational Administration, Planning and Social Policy

University of Cape Town

KKCYUK001@education.uct.ac.za

- Q1
1. Tick the subjects/courses that your institution currently offers.
  2. Circle the level of these subjects/courses.
  3. What is the estimated dropout rate for each subject/course at ABET level 3, 4 and NQF 2?

Should you have other subjects/courses offering, please fill in the blank column provided in each learning area with the subject/course names, levels, and dropout rates. (see *Example*)

#### Fundamental

<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication (Afrikaans)	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication (English)	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication (Xhosa)	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Numeracy	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)

#### Core

Art and Culture		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Music	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Needle work	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
Human and Social Science		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Geography	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	History	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
Life Orientation		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Biblical study	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
Management and Business Science		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accounting	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business economy	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)

<input type="checkbox"/> Economy	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<b>Natural Science</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Biology	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Physiology	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Science	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)

<b>Technology</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Technology	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)

#### **Elective**

<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship (SMMEs)	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Driving	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Fashion Design	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Health	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Tourism	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)

#### **Others (Vocational training)**

<input type="checkbox"/> Brick-making	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Child-care	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)

<input type="checkbox"/> Computer	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Furniture-making	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Painting	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Plantation (Gardening)	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Pottery	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Sewing	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Welding	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Woodwork	Level: (A-1, 2, 3, 4, N-2, 3, 4, S-8, 9, 10) A-4: (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%) N-2 (S-8): (~20%, ~40%, ~60%, ~80%, ~100%)

Q2

What other subjects/courses and at what level do you strongly feel your institution should offer? Why?

Q3 Why do you think your adult learners decided to learn? Please estimate the following reasons. Should you have other reasons, please specify in the blank spaces.

	Least important	<->			Most important
1. To better my life	( 1	2	3	4	5)
2. To get higher certificate/education level	( 1	2	3	4	5)
3. To be self-employed	( 1	2	3	4	5)
4. To gain a positive self-image	( 1	2	3	4	5)
5. To make friends	( 1	2	3	4	5)
6. To change myself as a person	( 1	2	3	4	5)
7. To get promotion	( 1	2	3	4	5)
8. To obtain Matric	( 1	2	3	4	5)
9. To get a job	( 1	2	3	4	5)
10. To read books/newspapers	( 1	2	3	4	5)
11. To help children's/others' homework	( 1	2	3	4	5)
12. _____	( 1	2	3	4	5)
13. _____	( 1	2	3	4	5)

Q4 What do you think your mission as an educational provider is in response to those adult learners' reasons for deciding to learn?

Q5 How feasible do you think the integration of education and (vocational) training that NQF promotes is in your institution?

Not at all feasible	<->			Very feasible
( 1	2	3	4	5)

Q6 To integrate education and (vocational) training in your institution, what changes would you need to make? Why?

Name of institution		
Name and position of answerer		
Type of institution (funding)	ABET, FET, Others ( )	
Cost of ABET 3/4 Communication class per learner		
Cost sharing (your budget : learners' tuition (%))		

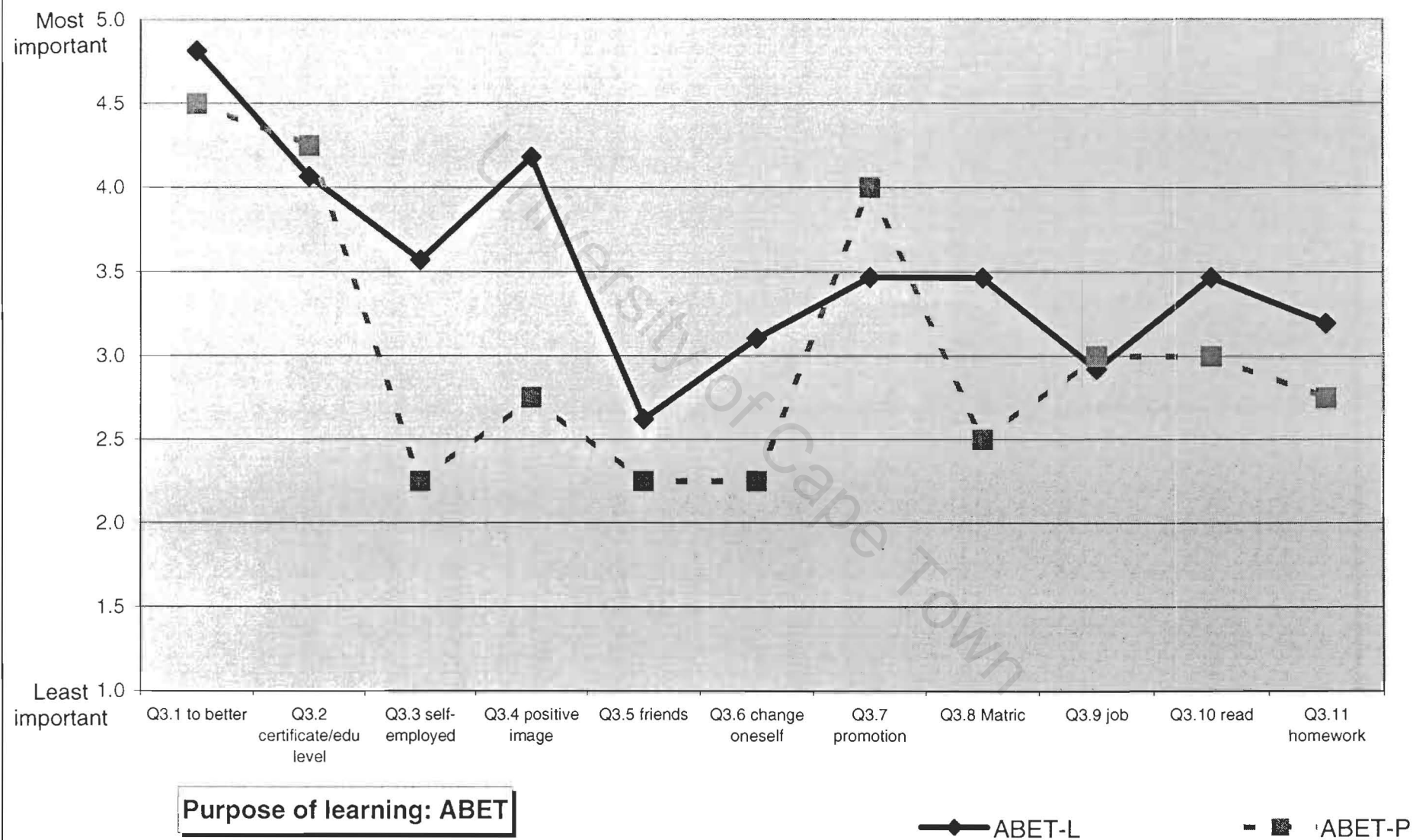
University of Cape Town

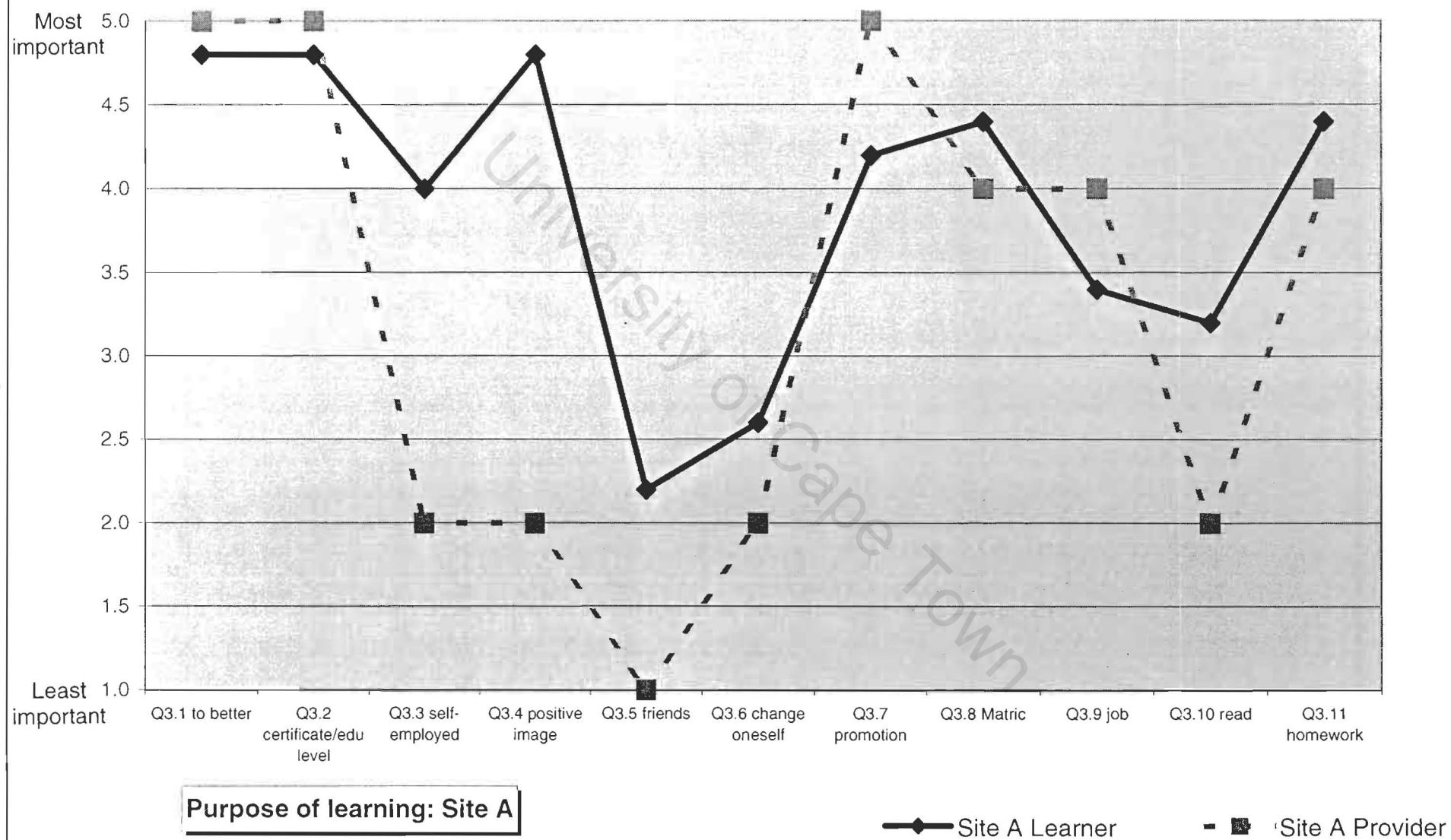


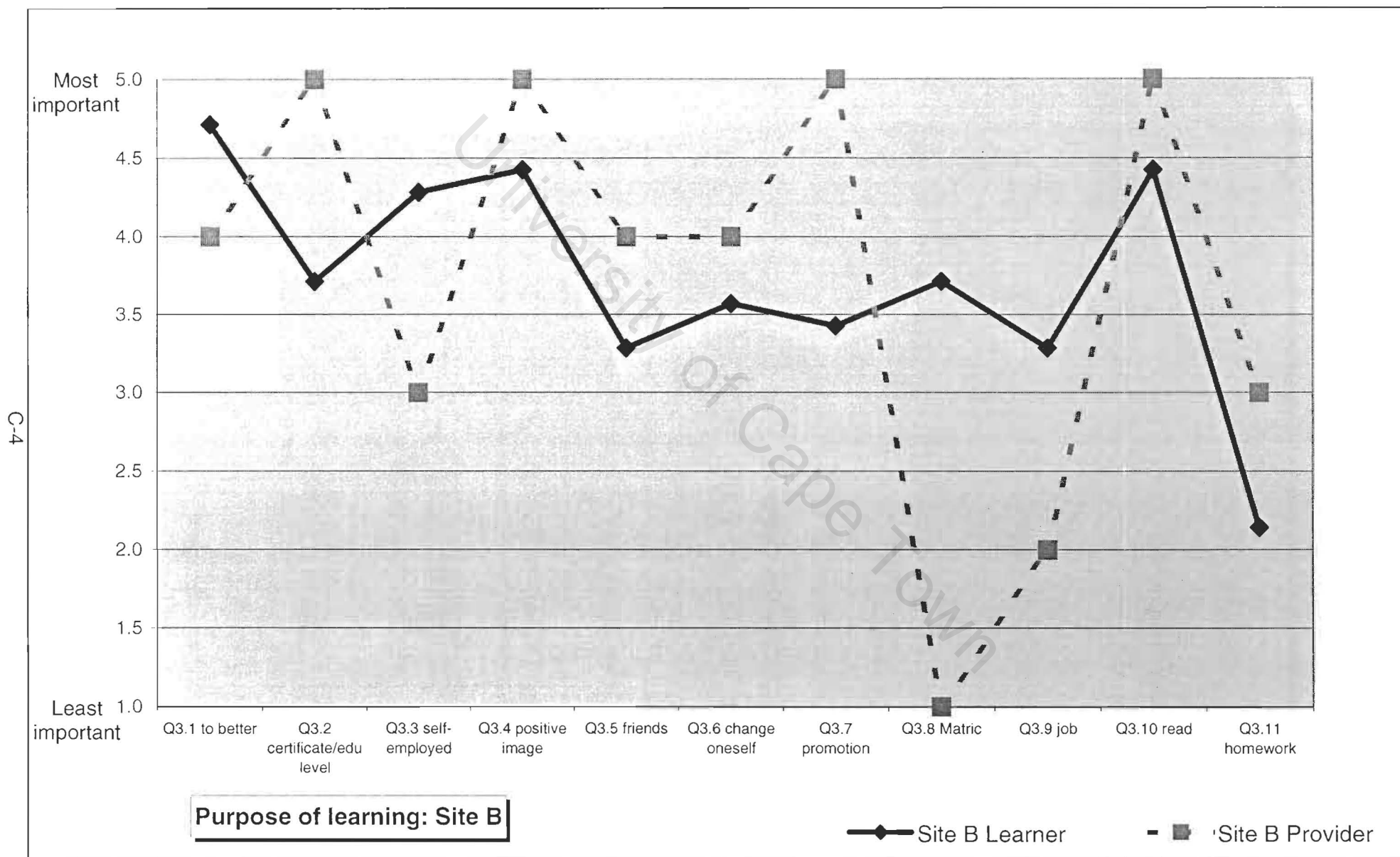
## Appendix C Purpose of learning (see Questionnaire, Q3)

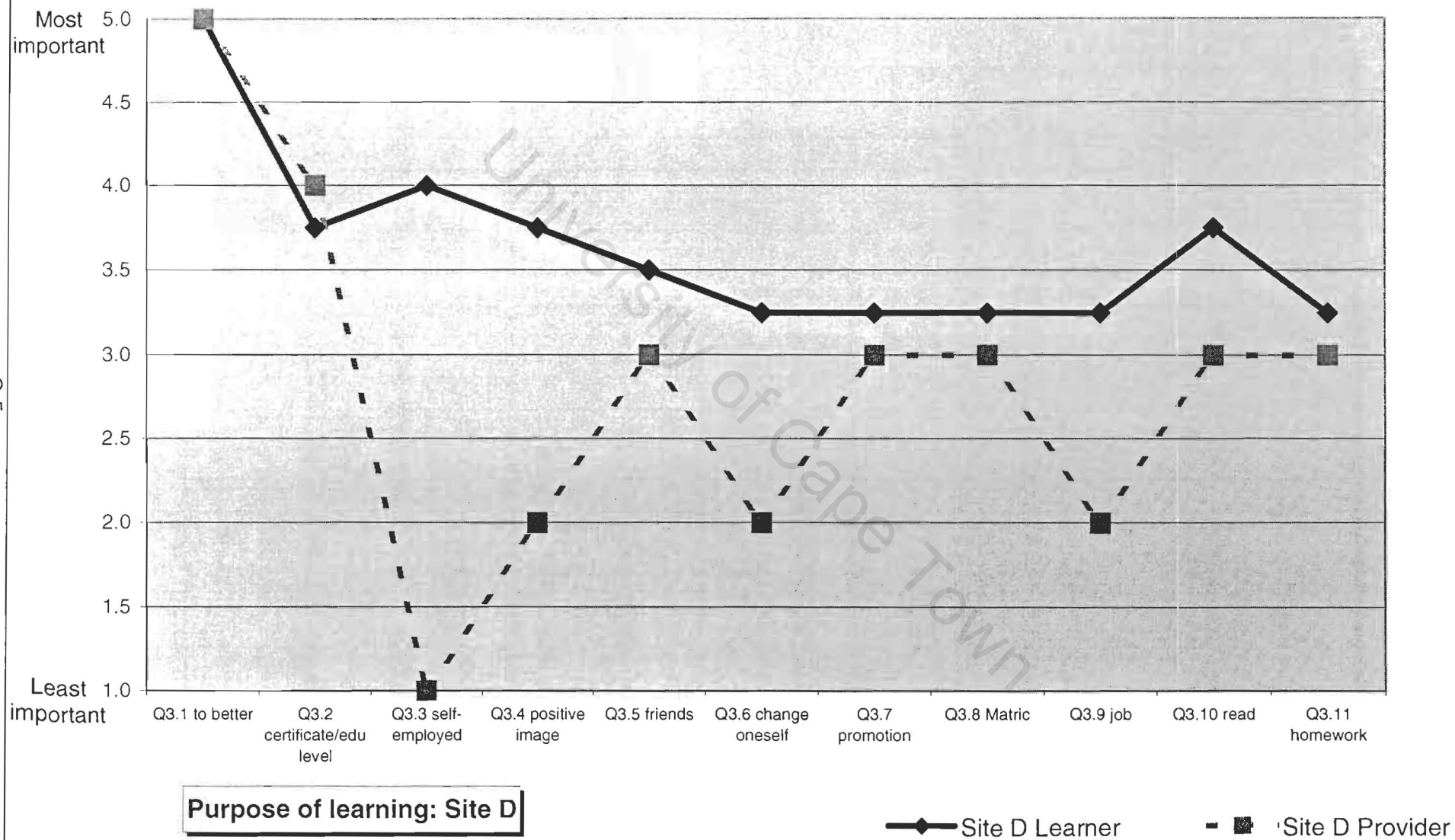
This appendix consists of comparison of purpose of learning between learners and providers per band and site. Site C is not included because there is no provider's data available.

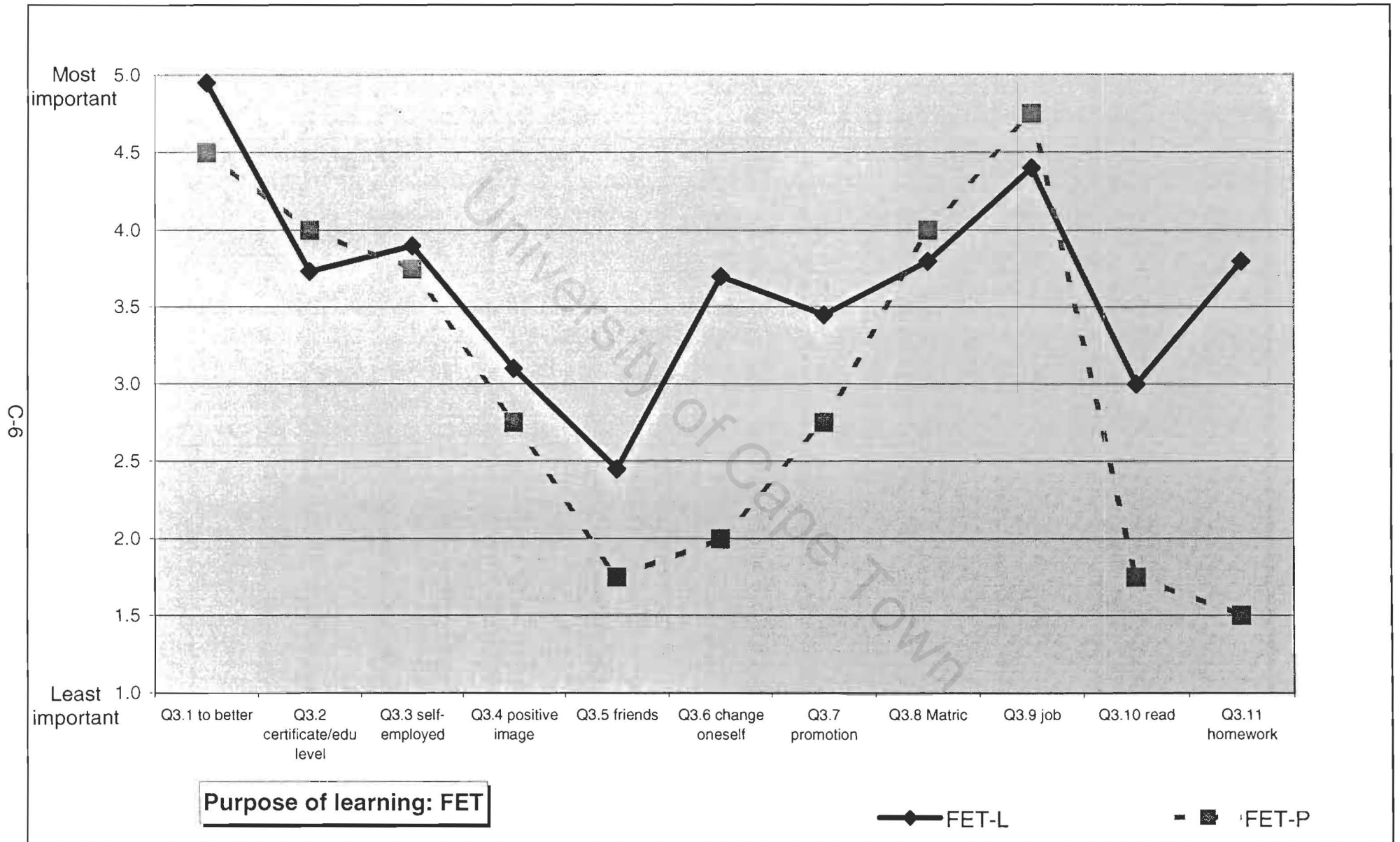
University of Cape Town

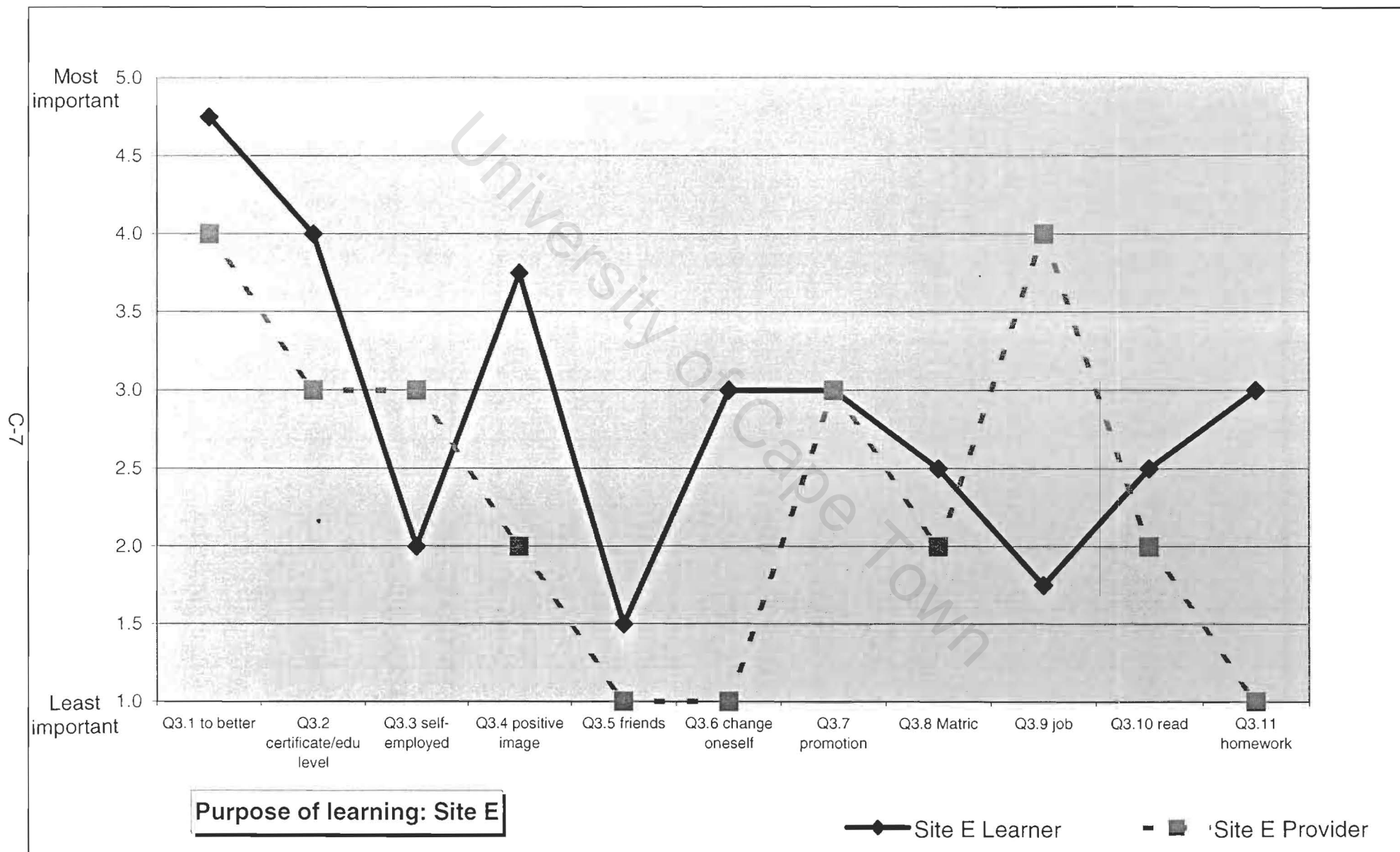




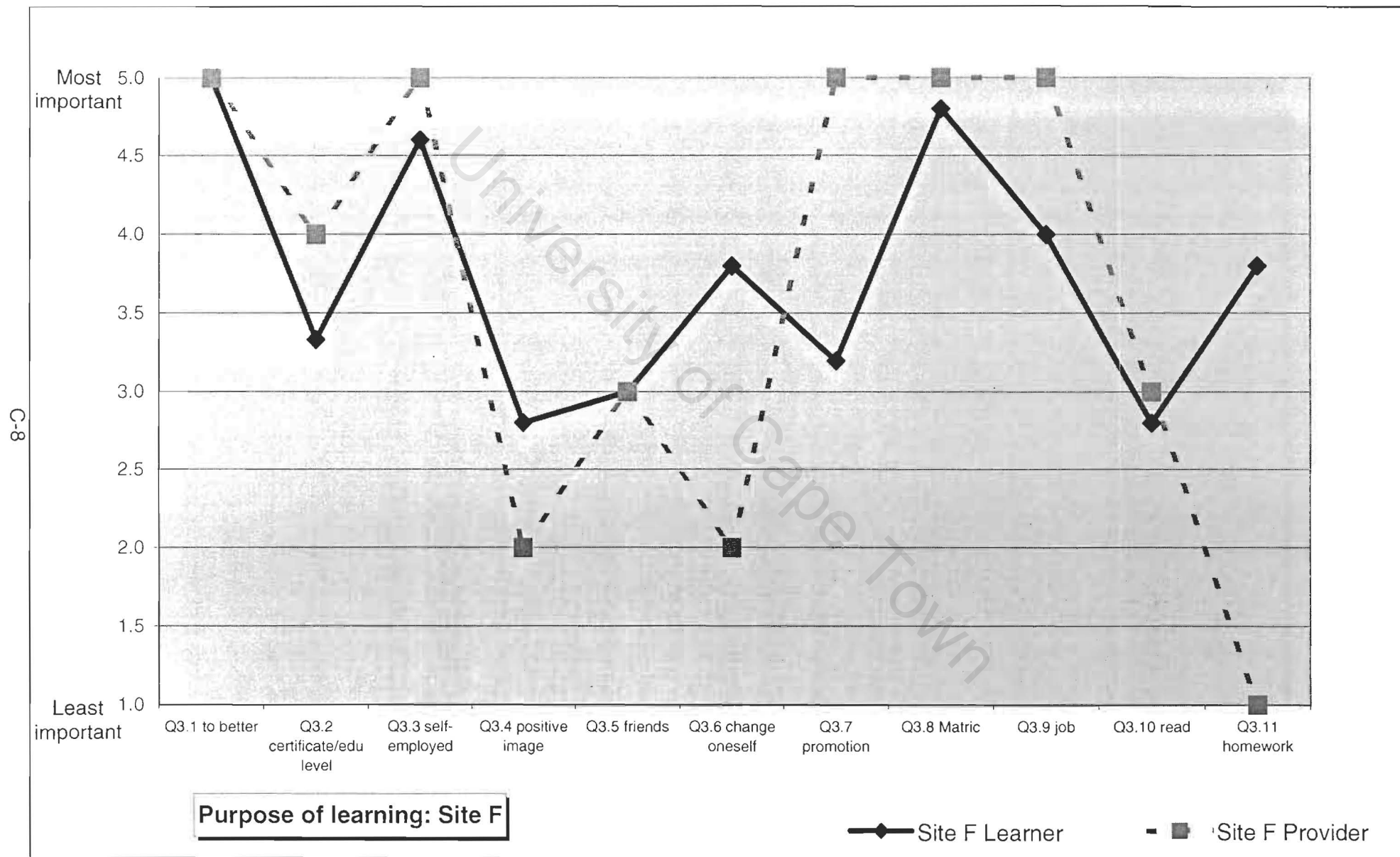




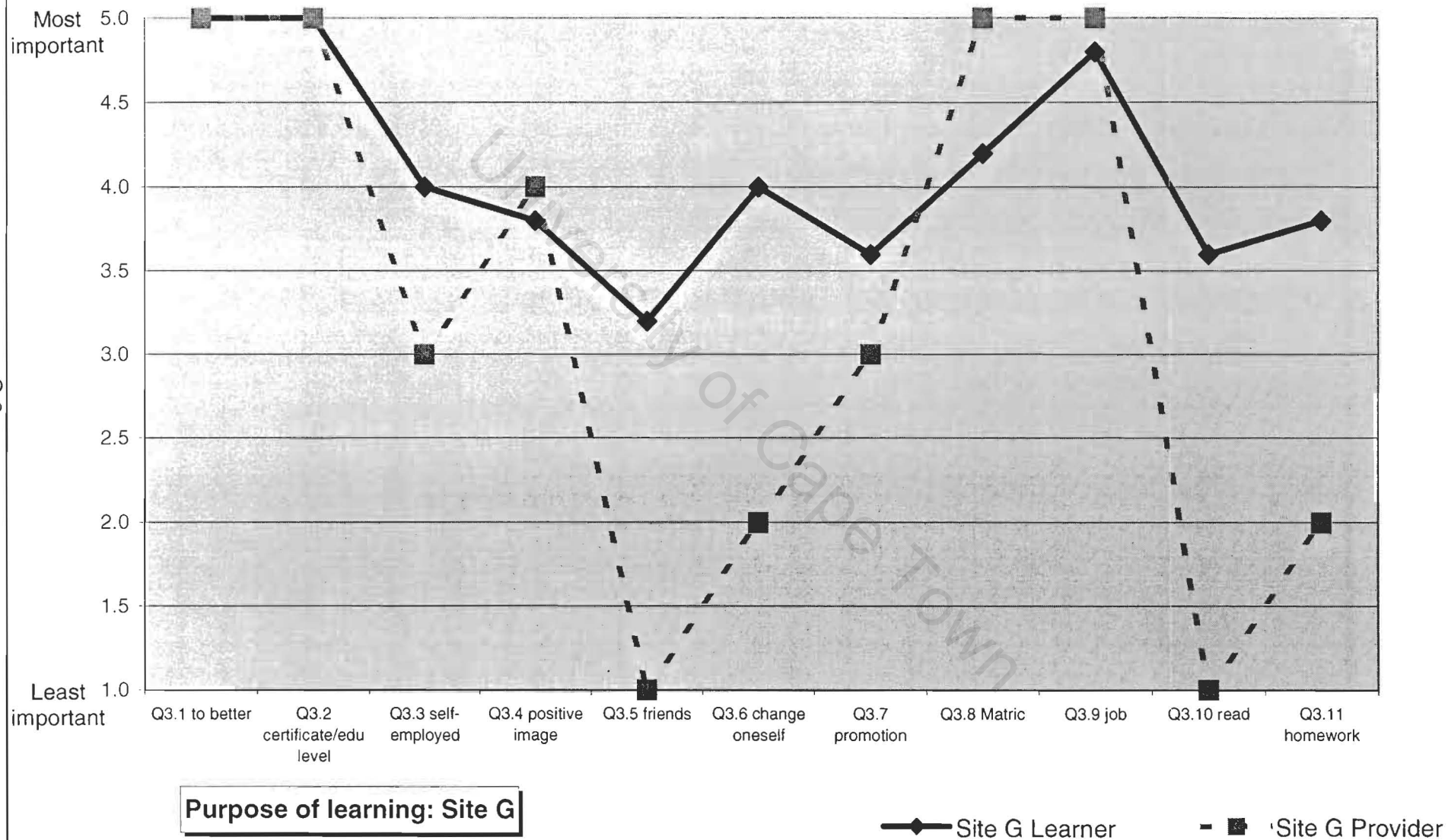


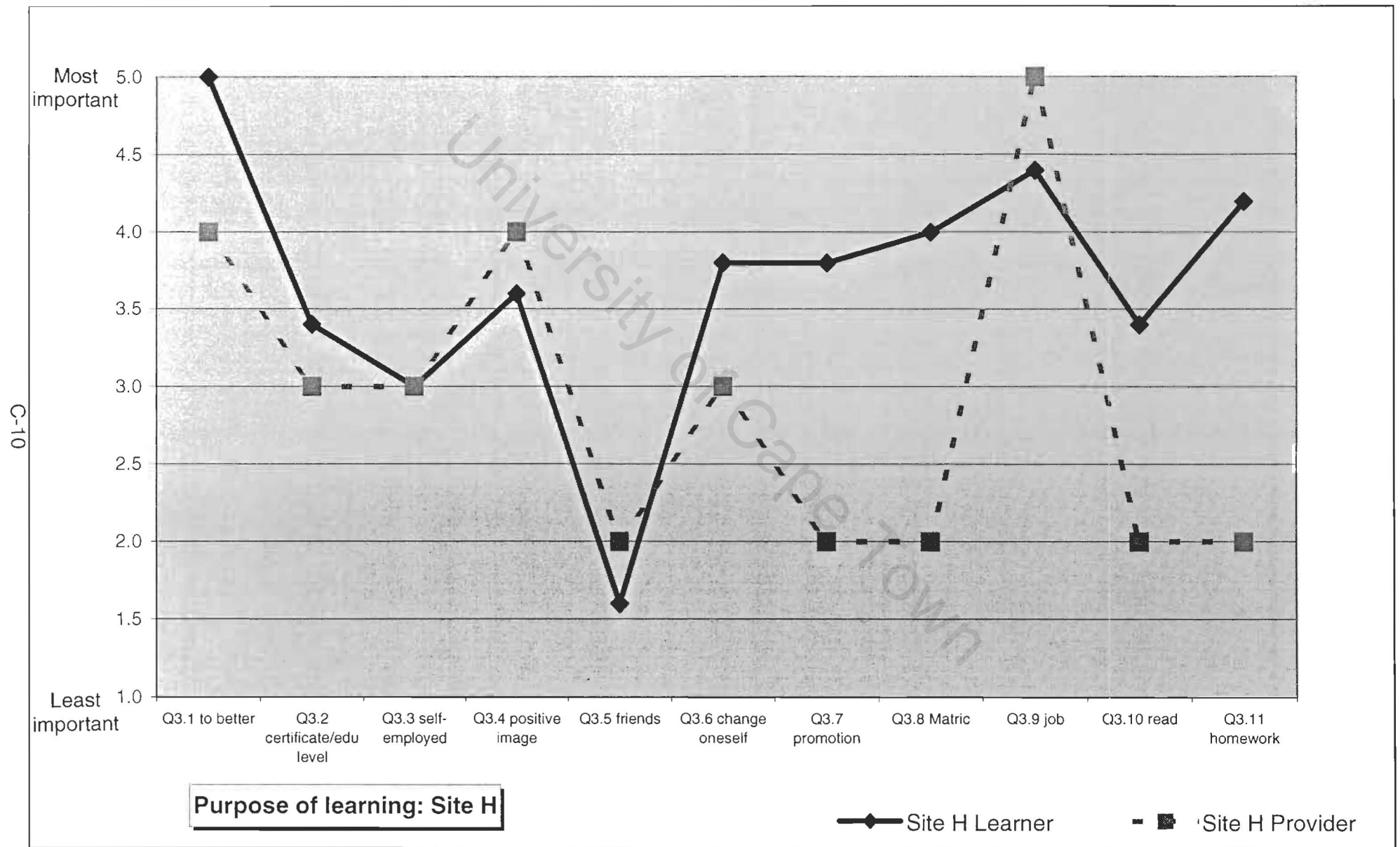


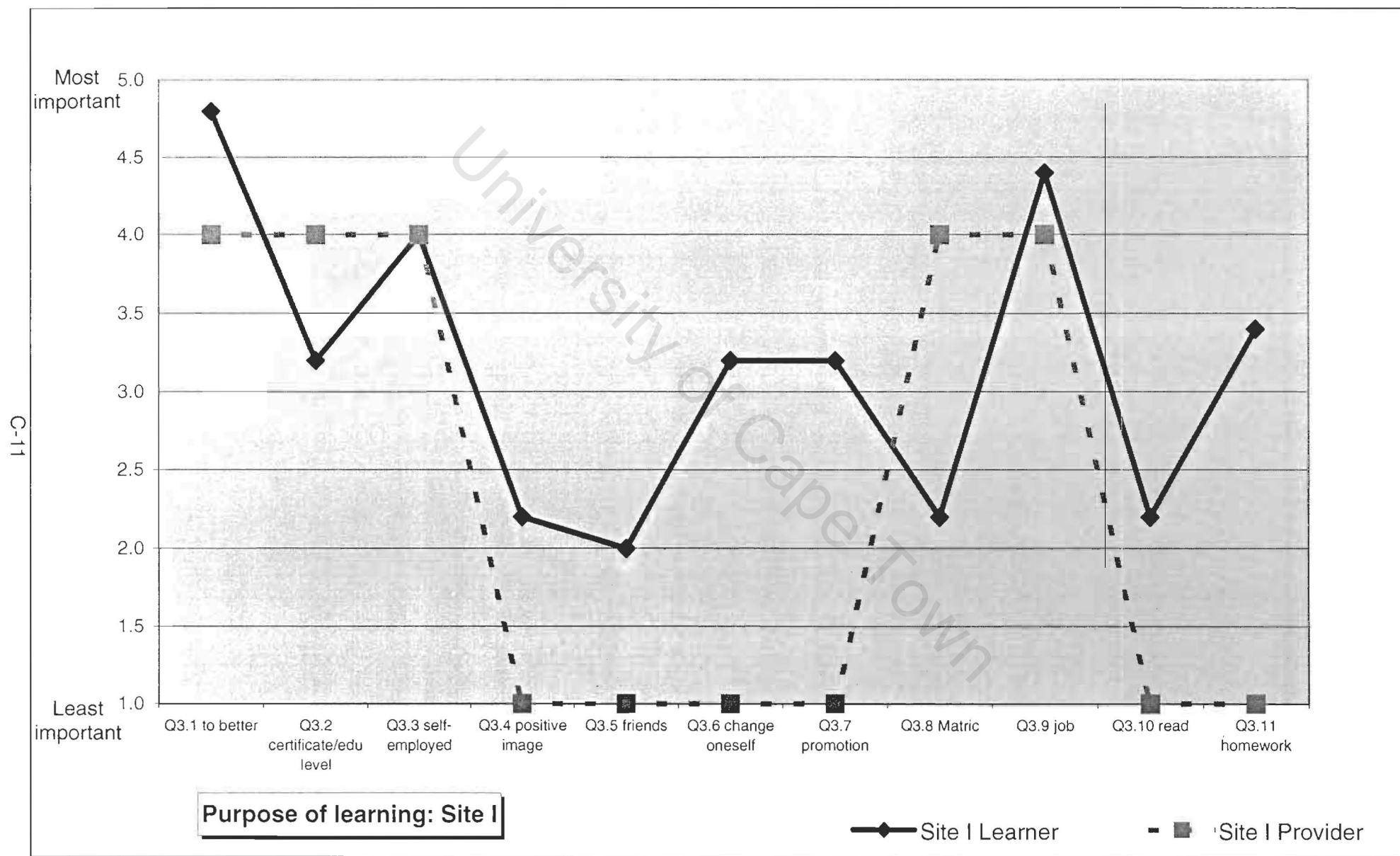


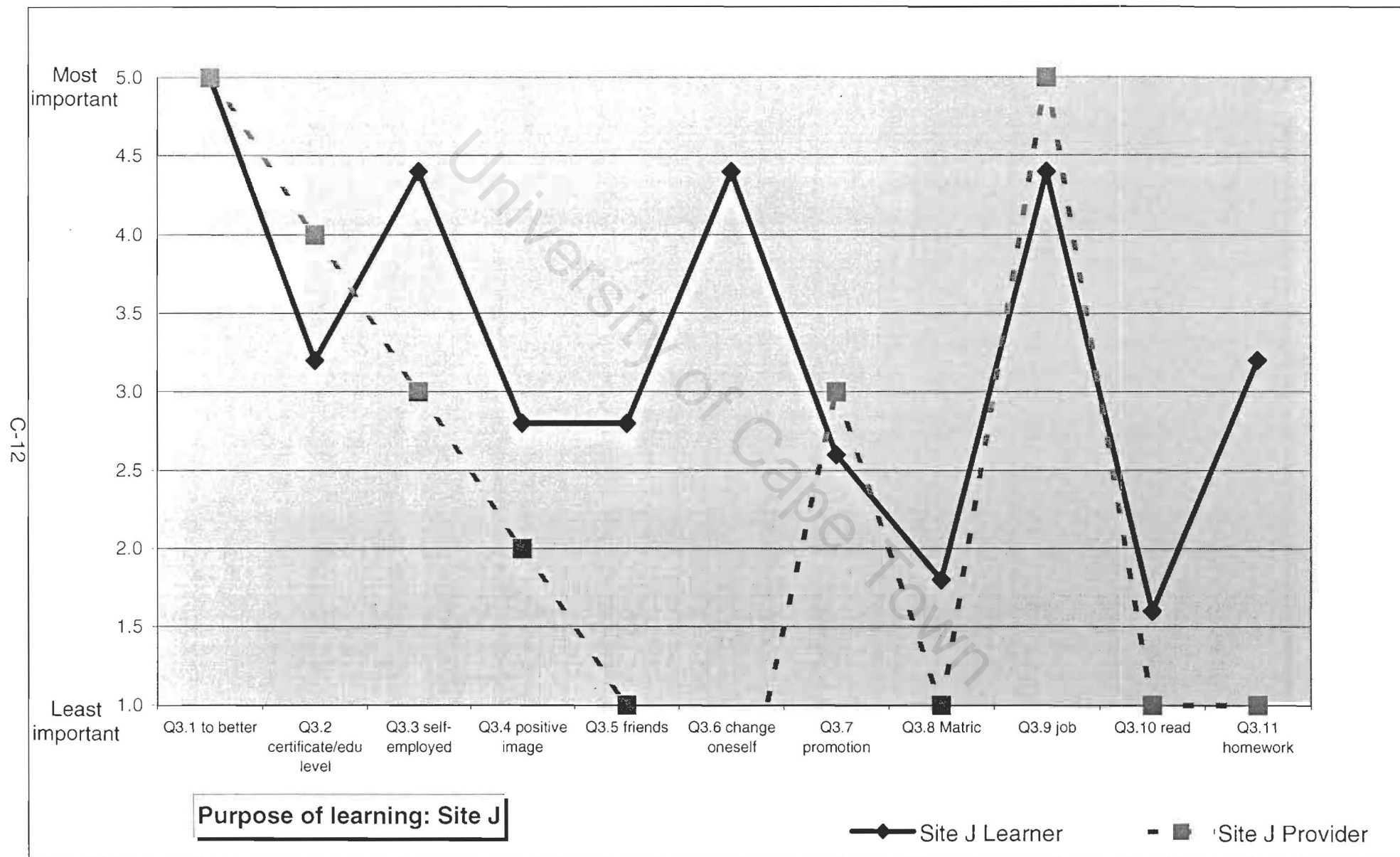








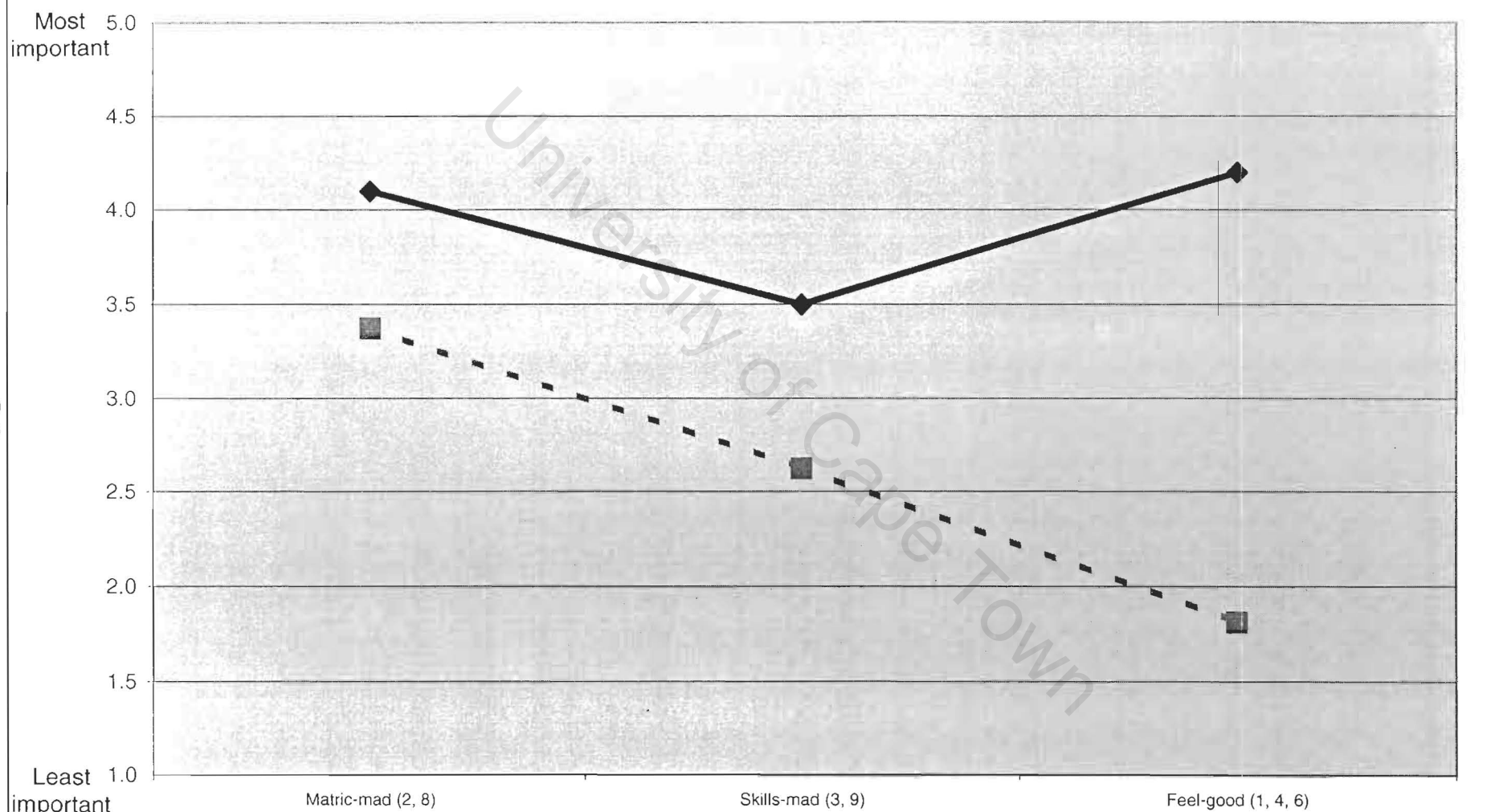




## Appendix D Purpose of learning (see Questionnaire, Q3)

This appendix consists of comparison of purpose of learning, that are categorised into 'Matric-mad', 'Skills-mad' and 'Feel-good', between learners and providers per band and site. Purposes fall into 'Purpose-unclear' are not included. Site C is not included because there is no provider's data available.

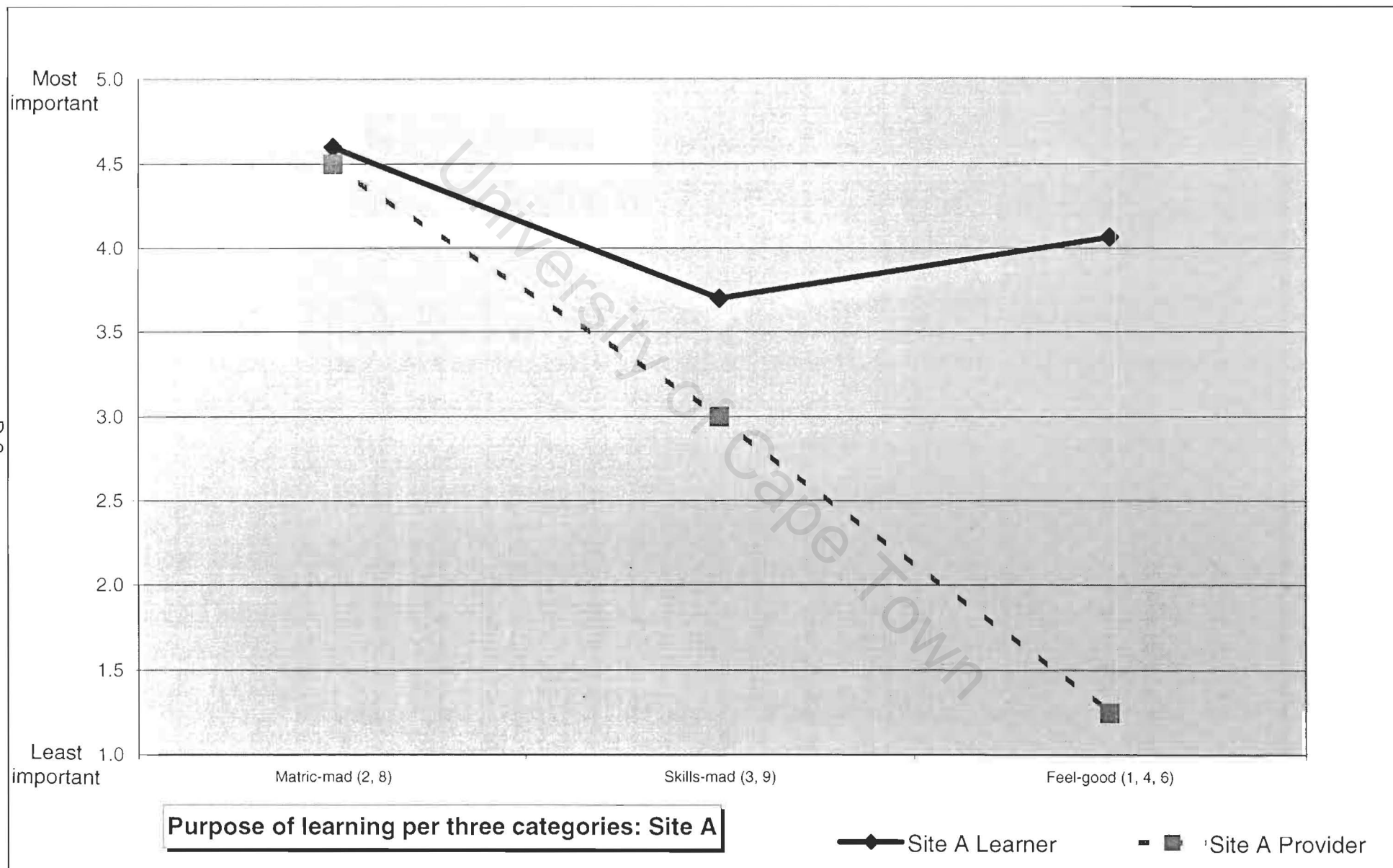
University of Cape Town



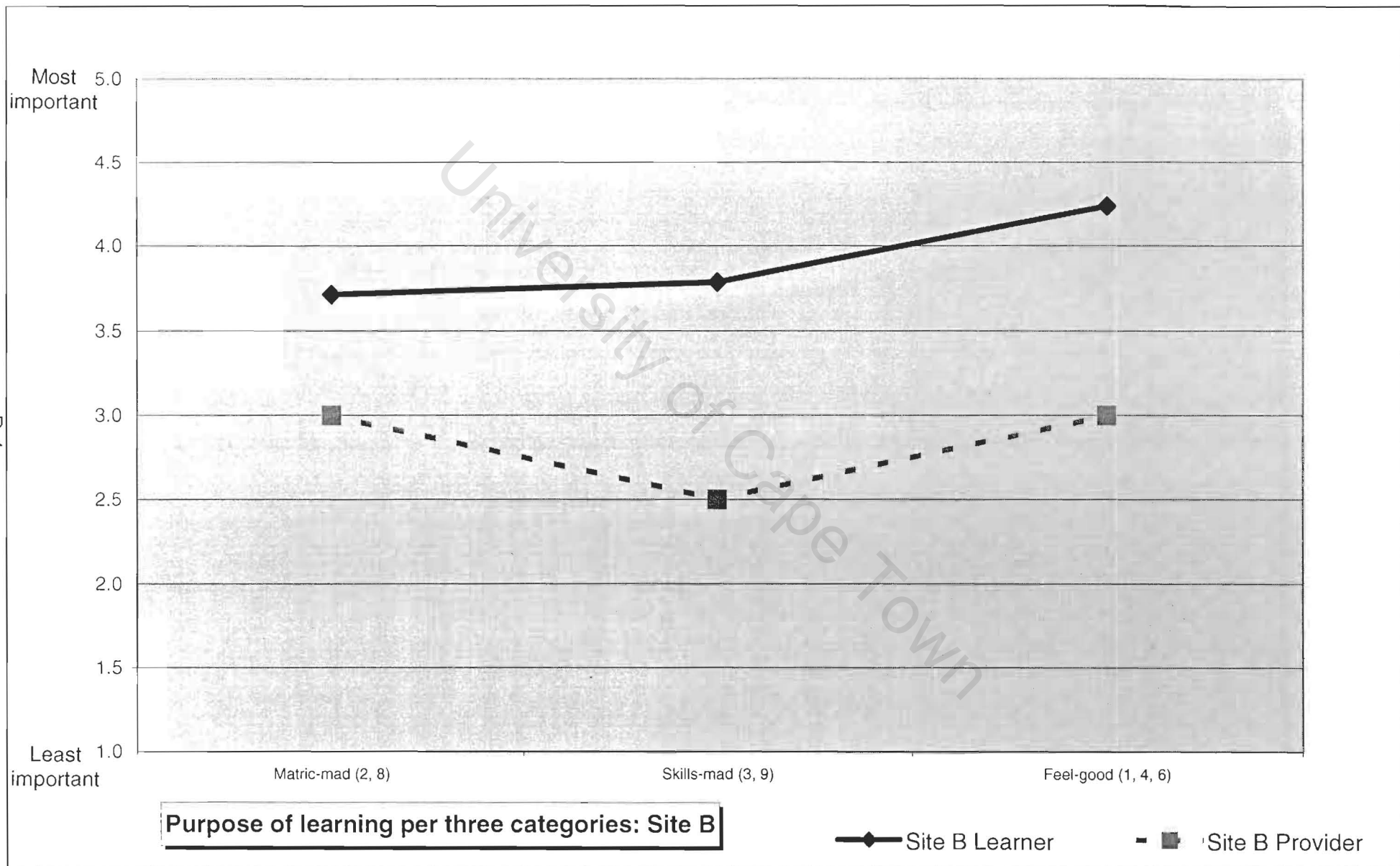
Purpose of learning per three categories: ABET

—◆— ABET-L

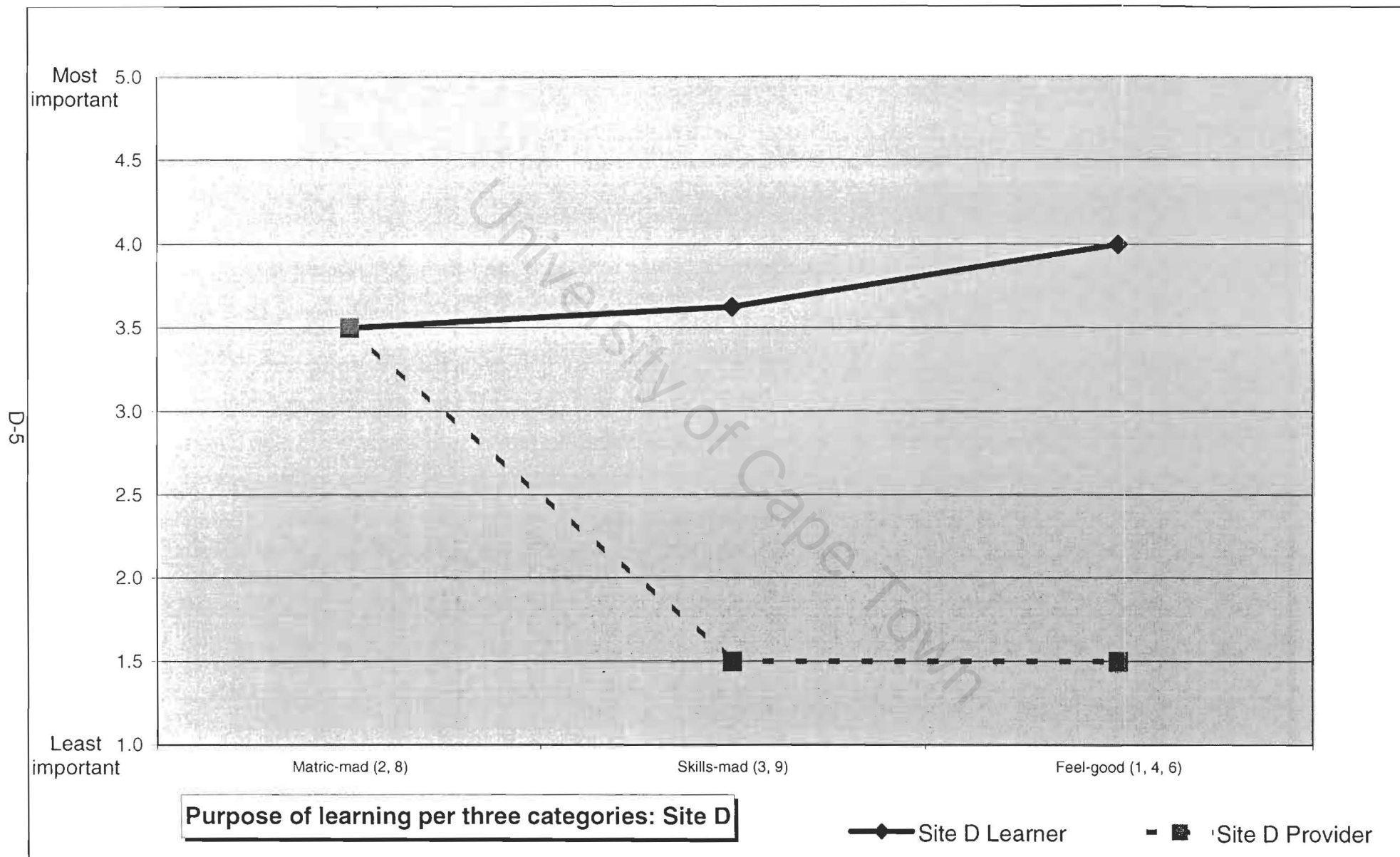
-■- ABET-P

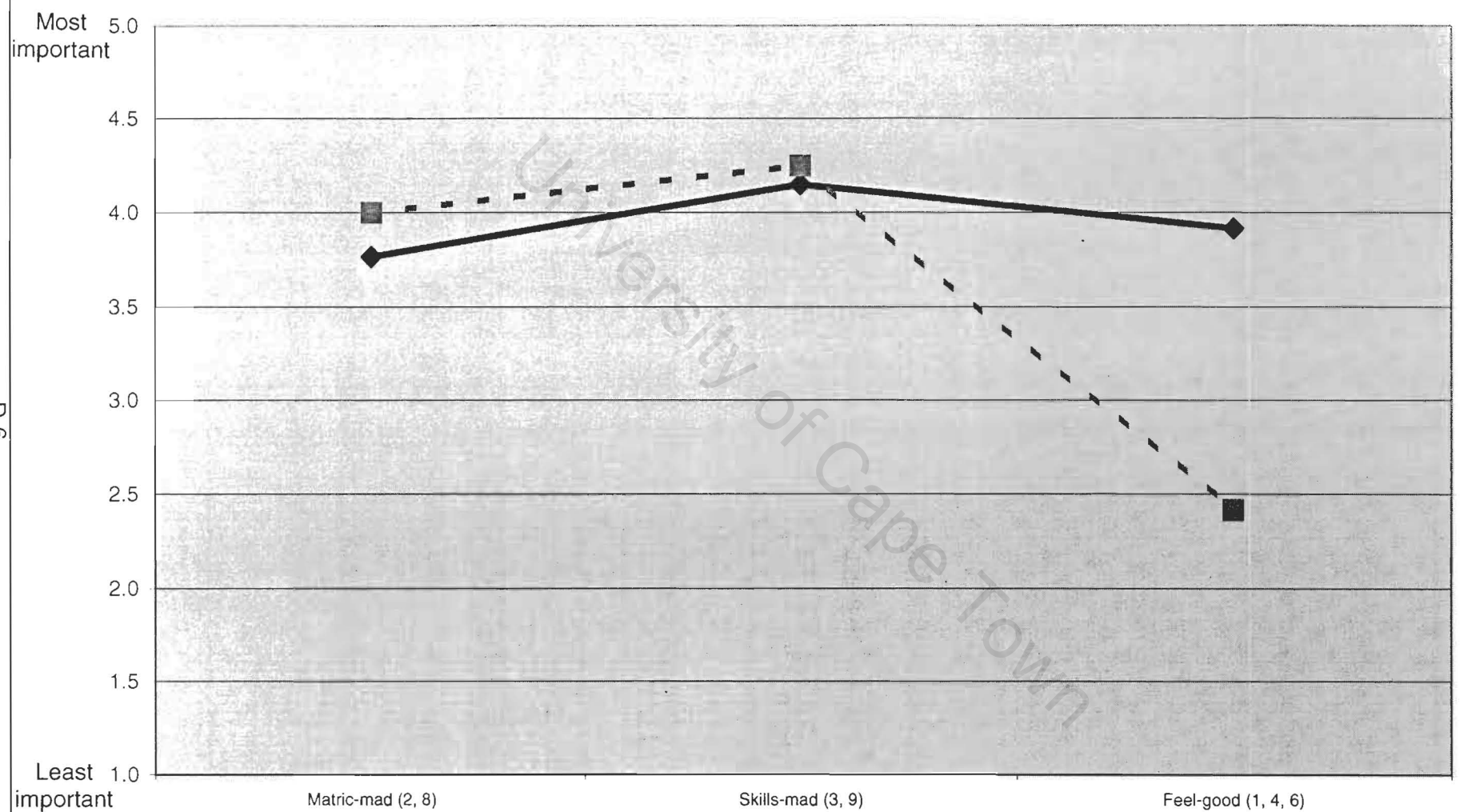












**Purpose of learning per three categories: FET**

—◆— FET-L

-■- FET-P

